

Press release

EU project consortium “DeStalk” shares practical insights on how to tackle digital violence against women

The DeStalk project has so far trained more than 350 practitioners addressing gender-based violence, on how to effectively tackle stalkerware and other digital forms of gender-based violence. On 16 December 2022, the DeStalk partners combining the expertise of the IT Security Community, Research and Civil Society Organisations, and Public Authorities, will share practical insights on building knowledge and capacities among stakeholders and practitioners to fight digital gender-based violence.

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The rapid proliferation of internet technologies places women and girls at an increased risk of experiencing [digital violence against women](#), including both violence committed online and technology-enabled abuse.

“Online violence is only the continuum of offline violence against women and girls. Violence against women that takes place offline every day, is widely amplified, spread, and worsened in the online world and by new technologies. We, as GREVIO, could not ignore these facts and last year we published our first General Recommendation on the digital dimension of violence against women. With this recommendation we put forward a list of measures that state parties can take to apply the standards of the Istanbul Convention more specifically to the many digital forms of violence that women and girls experience.”

Iris Luarasi, President of GREVIO

The internet and related technologies can contribute to [coercive control](#), especially in those relationships where violence is already present offline.

In Europe, [70%](#) of women who have experienced cyberstalking have also experienced at least one form of physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner. Moreover, Kaspersky's latest stalkerware [report](#) shows that in the European Union Germany, Italy, France and Spain are amongst the countries most affected by stalkerware.

As a response to this growing crisis of cyber violence against women, the [DeStalk](#) project, co-funded by the Rights, Equality, and Citizenship Programme of the European Union, has contributed to increase knowledge and technical capacity of relevant professionals and institutions, as well as their collaboration, to address stalkerware and cyber violence.

“While digital technologies offer an unprecedented opportunity for women and girls who have survived gender-based violence to access help and support, the paradox is that the same technology is misused to extend coercive control. High overlap between cyberstalking and physical contact violence and abuse shows that digital dimension of gender-based violence is yet another, reaching form of violence against women that reaches almost everywhere. DeStalk project tackles this challenge by bringing together knowledge of state-of-the-art technology with capacity building to prevent and respond to the digital dimension of violence against women.”

Dean Ajduković, WWP European Network Chair

- The DeStalk consortium developed an innovative **e-learning platform** to train professionals of women support services and perpetrator programmes, and officials from public authorities. The e-learning course has been widely popular among target groups and the maximum number of participants has been reached: over 130 participants have already successfully completed the course while additional 80+ professionals are expected to finalise it in the next months and refresh attendance again in the year after.
- Additionally, partners have developed new tools and upgraded already available ones to support the work of perpetrator programmes and victim support services, these have been compiled in a **training pathway**. 220+ practitioners addressing gender-based violence in their everyday work have undergone the training pathway and have acquired shared know-how on effective procedures and instruments.
- Finally, the DeStalk team has been developing guidelines and templates for institutions and organisations to run regional **awareness raising campaign** to stop digital violence against women. DeStalk spread awareness among the general public on the negative impact of cyber abuse and on how to safeguard oneself.

Given the high interest from practitioners and in view of a newest EU policy impulse, on 16 December 2022 the DeStalk dissemination online event "*Tackling the digital dimension of violence against women*" will bring together experts from relevant fields of competence to **stimulate crosscutting dialogue and cooperation among key stakeholders**. A panel made of research and cybersecurity entities, public authorities and law enforcement agencies, experts on gender-based violence and practitioners of services, will be happy to share their experience and approach and interact with attendees. In addition, the project partners will share DeStalk outputs outlining how regional ecosystems may **further implement the action** and incorporate the outputs in their local strategy against cyberviolence.

"We are thrilled to see that the DeStalk e-learning course on cyberviolence and stalkerware has been running very successfully. The course, which we developed together with our expert partners from research and education, civil society organizations and governmental authorities, fills a knowledge gap among professionals working in the field of domestic violence. As tackling digital violence is of utmost importance, we would like to help other organizations to replicate the efforts that we undertook. To that end, we are honored to share our expertise and experiences from the project with the public at the DeStalk online conference on December 16th"

Christina Jankowski, Senior External Relations Manager, Kaspersky

The event will take place on **Friday 16 December 2022 from 9.30 to 12.30 CET online**, and will be held in English, with English subtitles. Participation is free of charge while registration is mandatory.

More info: <https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/destalk>

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