

Launch of the ASAP 2.0 project to prevent domestic violence against women through the strengthening of perpetrator programs

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An EU-wide project will expand on the work done by earlier ASAP project to develop a systemic approach and multiagency collaboration among different agencies aimed at preventing and combating GBV

Starting in March 2022, partners from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Germany and Italy have teamed up to work on the EU wide ASAP 2.0 - Systemic approach to prevent and contrast domestic violence.

Working with perpetrators of domestic violence is one of the key elements for prevention of violence against women and domestic violence. This understanding forms the basis of ASAP 2.0 project, the objective of which is to prevent and combat male violence against women and children through the strengthening of treatment programs for perpetrators and the creation and consolidation of multi-agency networks. This can be achieved with the implementation of a standardised methodology for the collaboration between PPs and SSVs, as urged by national and international legislations and agencies.

The target groups that ASAP 2.0 will engage include i) male perpetrators of violence, ii) women who experience violence (and, indirectly, their children) and iii) professionals that work with victims and perpetrators.

Effective collaboration between PPs and SSVs

The need for an effective collaboration between perpetrator programs and victim support services is one of the key strategies to prevent and tackle gender-based violence, and to address the increase in domestic violence due to the emergency situation caused by COVID. An increased risk of intimate partner violence as a consequence of the pandemic has been a concern in the EU member states and globally. A study, conducted by "Association NAIA", shows that the COVID-19 pandemic (from March



2020 to March 2021) has put new challenges to women victims of domestic violence and aggravated their economic and social situation. Among the factors that led to an increase of VAW and DV during the Pandemic, a study commissioned by the EU Parliament mentions: Increased contact between perpetrators and victims Increase in intensity and frequency of incidents of violence (especially in Italy and Greece). The increased contact between victims and perpetrators during COVID-19 lockdowns requires a systemic approach to the situation, and a constant and joint monitoring, assessment and evaluation from both sides.

One of the main challenges faced by service providers during covid was that the shift to online work made it problematic to accurately identify and assess risk and protective measures for victims. Where collaboration between service providers and other stakeholders took place, it helped in developing constructive solutions to manage the cases. It is in this context that the ASAP 2.0 project focuses on the prevention of gender-based violence by addressing masculinities and engagement of men and boys.

Upscaling the work done with ASAP project

ASAP 2.0 will develop and upscale the work done within the project “ASAP - A Systemic Approach for Perpetrators”. The success of dissemination actions of ASAP highlighted the fact that professionals and stakeholders across Europe believe a collaboration protocol is key to an efficient work with perpetrators and victims and that the protocol should be further developed and implemented in new Countries. As the ASAP protocol was developed before the pandemic, and it does not take into consideration online treatment and online meetings.

As mentioned earlier, new priorities have emerged lately within the work against domestic violence, and it has become important to address online violence, to foster child protection and to consider pandemic occurrences while outlining the best possible perpetrator work while ensuring effectiveness and safety. ASAP 2.0 will therefore extend the areas of competence and practice of the ASAP protocol and ensure that it delivers effective perpetrator work online and ensure safety of women and children in restriction situations. The use of the ASAP protocol and toolkit within the



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countries previously targeted will also be expanded in terms of geographical coverage, language and knowledge and dissemination in new countries.

“We have made great progress in improving the cooperation between our Victim support service and the Perpetrator program, following the implementation of the ASAP protocol and assessment tools. We expect in ASAP 2 project to update and improve the protocol, including important aspects such as the Covid-19 situation, online work and child protection. It is very important for us to work for multiagency cooperation as well. I am sure that we will be able to present at European level an effective model of coordinated support for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence, at the end of this project”, says Svetla Sivcheva, Chairperson of the Board, Association NAIA.

About the partnership

The ASAP 2.0 project is developed by an international, interdisciplinary team consisting of:

- UCPU, Una Casa per l’Uomo, NGO specialised in the prevention and combat of GBV and IPV, Italy
- Association NAIA, NGO in Targovishte region that aims to promote equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres of economic and social life, Bulgaria
- UWAH, NGO active in the promotion and protection of women’s and children rights; while also engaging with raising awareness and advocating for human rights at local, national and European level, Greece
- APHVF/SPAVO, Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family, is an NGO that provides support to victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence and awareness raising activities for the general public, Cyprus
- WWP EN, the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence, Germany and Europe

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