



European
Network

NATIONAL REPORT

Country: Hungary

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1) **Country** (max 1800 characters)

- *The overview of general situation in Your country regarding work with perpetrators (e.g. What has change in your country legislation within the last 4 years? Most important legal and policy measures implementation; In which way they helped?)*
- *Do You know any other organisations/programmes in your country which deal with domestic violence prevention mostly by work with perpetrators? If yes please point them out*

There is no specific program for work with perpetrators in domestic violence at all.

There is a project, called Stop Male Violence¹ which main target is awareness raising about the domestic violence and other type of male violence with publications, books, flyers or film club etc. The project runs a hotline to support also men who wish to change the violent behaviour in their own lives.

The other organizations beside the campaigns against the domestic violence focus more on the protection of the victims and make legal aid services². There is an organization called "Váltó-sáv"³ which works for the integration of persons released from prison but their programs are not specified for the perpetrators of domestic violence.

Until this year domestic violence was not a discrete criminal offense in law. Before, domestic violence was treated in the criminal code in the same way as other forms of violence against the person.

¹<http://www.stop-ferfioszak.hu/en>

² <http://nane.hu/english/index.html>; <http://patent.org.hu/english>; <http://eszteralapitvany.hu/>; <http://mona-alapitvany.hu/english-2/>

³ <http://www.valtosav.hu/english.html>

After a civil initiative and a big political issue about the regulation of domestic violence on July 1, 2013 Hungary finally adopted a penal code provision that criminalizes domestic violence. It applies to various types of violence when perpetrated by spouses, ex-spouses, cohabitants, ex-cohabitants, custodians, and people living with guardians. The law also covers psychological and economic violence and sets out a maximum sentence of three years for simple battery and five years for aggravated battery.

It is a very important step, but the woman rights NGOs and also the Human Rights Watch in a recently published report⁴ drawn the attention about the big gaps in the law.

In order for the new domestic violence offense to apply, there must be more than one instance of violence “within a short period of time” which has not cleared definition; the law excludes groups of women who do not cohabit (or did not cohabit), unless they have children with the abuser; and the sexual violence is not included as a category classified as domestic violence.

The main critique about the tackling of the domestic violence from the professionals is that there is no comprehensive national strategy or policy on how to combat the problem. There are only guidelines for the police on domestic violence but no comparable guidelines for prosecutors, judges, and health and social workers.

1. **Best practices** (max 1800 characters)

- *Point out the best practices in work with perpetrators existing in your organisation/country*
- *Can they be implemented in other organisations/countries? If yes – how? If no – why?*

As mentioned above at the moment there does not exist any work with perpetrators program in Hungary.

In 2007 in the framework of DAPHNE II perpetrators also built one of the target groups of a pilot project whose goal was to tackle the gender-based violence in prison. A socio-educational program was made for the men who have committed gender-based violence with the aim of change of men’s way of thinking; to make them realize they do not have the right to abuse women.

The program was held by two male facilitators and lasted for 6 months with weekly group sessions. Participation in the program was voluntary and the group started only with six participants. However it was not possible to evaluate whether the program effected long term changes in the participants’ behaviours and the length of the program was also very limited the conclusion of this program says that the program for the men ended without any

⁴ http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/hungary1113_ForUpload.pdf

Human Rights Watch (2013): *Unless Blood Flows. Lack of Protection from Domestic Violence in Hungary*

results. According to the writers the unacceptability of violence could not be justified to them in a prison where men's use of violence was embedded in the structural violence of the institute. "The conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of this and similar projects is that the trend to redirect the resources dedicated to increasing women's safety from violence into programs for treating abusive men should be critically reassessed⁵."

Similar recommendations are readable in a methodological guide⁶ for the effective action against the domestic violence which was written in 2012 by two of the largest women's rights NGO in co-operation with other professionals. The most important tasks for the combat of the problem are drafted in the guide. The work with perpetrators as an option for one way to prevent domestic violence comes after all the others. The professionals argue that according to the best practices from abroad the efficiency of these programs is questionable and also ethically it is a very problematic part of the issue.

Since there is a lack of adequate shelters and the protection of the victims are also not resolved, the work with perpetrators programs - in consequence of the above mentioned findings and judgement - has no priority.

2) **Needs and recommendations** (max 1800 characters)

- *What has to be done in regard to prevent domestic violence in your country (mostly regarding to work with perpetrators)?*
- *Point out the most urgent, most important and most promising tasks and steps that should be focused on*
 - awareness raising
 - training of treatment of domestic violence cases in the police, health care, for social workers etc.
 - tackle the protection of the victim: effective response when violence does occur
 - Until the victims are not protected the work with perpetrators cannot be discussed mostly because of the victim-centered approach and the lack of resources.

⁵ SURT (ed.) (2007): *Tackling Gender Violence in Prison. Manual of in Prison Programmes against Gender-Based Violence*:125

http://www.surt.org/altra/docs/manual_angles.pdf

⁶ <http://nokjoga.hu/sites/default/files/filefield/mu-fulltext.pdf>

NANE Egyesület — PATENT Egyesület (2012): *Szakmai módszertani útmutató a párkapcsolati erőszak elleni hatékony fellépésre*