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# **National Report 2017**

## **Slovakia**



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## Report Details

Organisation: ADRA SLOVAKIA

Author: Daniela Borzová

Other organisation: o.z. BRIEŽDENIE , BEZPEČNÝ ŽENSKÝ DOM ( Women safety house for victims of violence)

## Organisations/programmes

What type of activities related to preventing domestic violence has/have your organisations carried out in the last three years?

Our organisation, ADRA Slovakia, is new in the area of domestic violence. Since July 2017, we provide free legal counselling to victims of DV, among other things.

ADRA Slovakia organised a discussion called: Talking about violence. It was a first discussion between three experts (social worker, psychologist and lawyer) and victims, of which we plan to organise more soon.

In the future, we plan to set up a crisis intervention team (CIT). The CIT will be a team of experts from law, social work and psychology, offering a long-distance, ambulance and outdoor aid to support victims in the process of quitting a violent relationship.

Additionally, our organisation has ambitions to publish, educate on the topic of DV, and bring the issue of DV into the light through discussions. ADRA will also put pressure on state institutions like police, courts, and forensic experts to further inter-agency cooperation and to aid victims of violence.

What would you define as the biggest obstacles/challenges regarding violence prevention to your organisation/s? Please focus on the last three years.

- Better cooperation between state and private organisations: in Slovakia, there is no functional coordinating committee. One institute KMC (Coordination methodical centre) exists, but the non-governmental organisations neither see any results from their work, nor receive any support from them.
- Lack of funding: an increase of financial support from the state, funds, etc. is necessary
- A change of approach: the police, prosecutor and court system in our country need to change the way they handle victims of DV and the topic in general
- Improved networking between all organisations
- An increased communication and continued discussions with victims
- Launching the CIT



### Country

Please give an overview of general situation in your country regarding work with perpetrators.

In Slovakia, the state is in charge of perpetrator work and non-governmental organisations are not involved in this area. There is only one NGO cooperating with the state called “Alianca pre ženy”.

The problem is in on the level of the legal system and court decisions. There is no option to sentence perpetrators to a participation in behavioural programmes. The justice system leaves it up to the will of the perpetrators, which leads to a low rate of perpetrators signing up for programmes.

Please give an overview of your country’s criminal and civil responses 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?)

In Slovakia, the main problem is the access to legal support and justice for the victim. The criminal law does not consider, for example, psychological aspects of violence. Decisions in criminal law are strictly based on one point of view, without considering the victims’ perspectives.

Secondary victimisation is a big problem when dealing with police officers. During criminal proceedings, the police often question why the victim did not leave their violent partner earlier, putting most of the blame and responsibility on the victims.

Within civil law, the situation is not much better. There are precautions such as preliminary protective measures for victims and civil courts tend to take into account the victim’s point of view. However, especially when children are involved the courts do not understand that the children are as much victims of DV as their mothers and do not do enough to protect either of them.

Starting 1 January 2018, Slovakia will have the „Code for victims“. This is the first law supporting and protection victims of crime, especially victims of domestic violence. It is also the first law in the Slovakian legal system that defines victim as term. This is a very important step leading to protection and prevention of crime, since the code also regulates relationship between NGOs and the state, as well as tasks of the state and NGOs.

Please tell us the progress your country has made in relation to the Istanbul Convention.

Slovakia signed the Convention in 2011 as one of the first countries of the EU, but the government has yet to ratify it.



The most powerful voices against a ratification of the Convention come from the church – there is a strong Christian lobby opposed to the Istanbul Convention. On the other side, mainly non-governmental organisations are working to influence the governmental institution towards an implementation and ratification of the Convention.

Do you know any other organisations/programmes in your country that carry out domestic violence perpetrator work? If yes please detail them.

Perpetrator work is in the hands of the government, the only NGO doing perpetrator work is “Alianca žien”, since they cooperate with the government.

### Best practices

Tell us about best practice in work with perpetrators in your country?

Our organisation does not do perpetrator work and we don't have any information on best practice examples. Work with perpetrators is under the responsibility of the criminal justice system and the prisons.

### Needs and recommendations

What has to be done to prevent domestic violence in your country (regarding work with perpetrators)? 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?

- To further cooperation between NGOs and state actors
- To educate police and courts how to work with victims and understand their behaviour
- To talk, discuss with victims and involve them to the educational process of experts, to empower voices of victims
- To facilitate the education and work of the experts in area of domestic violence, including the remuneration as many of the experts are carrying out their work for the good cause

