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# **National Report 2017**

## **Slovenia**



## Contents

Report Details.....	3
Organisations/programmes: .....	3
Country:-.....	4
Best practice:-.....	5
Needs and recommendations:-.....	6



## Report Details

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## Organisations/programmes:

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

Our preventive activities in the last 3 years have been:

- Preventive workshops with students at primary schools, secondary schools and universities
- Workshops for survivors of violence
- Trainings for professionals
- Lectures for the professional and general public
- Press releases
- Round tables
- Collaboration with media
- Using Facebook profile to promote nonviolence and related subjects
- Work with children, victims of violence
- Work with young people who commit or/and experience violence (group and individual)
- Work with adult perpetrators of violence (group and individual)
- Work with victims of violence
- Parenting Skills Training

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

The greatest obstacle/challenge has been a lack of resources for the number of perpetrators we work with. In 2016, seven employees worked with 580 perpetrators and from January 2017 until November 2017 with 643 perpetrators.

Another challenge is that Social Skills Training groups are led by a single counsellor and not a couple.

Furthermore, we don't have our own offices in most of the towns where we carry out Social Skills Training programme, exceptions being Ljubljana and Koper. We work in the facilities of centres for social work, which limits the services we can offer in these areas. Moreover, in some



of the towns there are no victim support services, which are in our opinion an important part of violence prevention programmes.

Another challenge is also our aim to increase collaboration with victim support services.

Our programmes are low threshold programmes, which means the counselling work itself is very challenging and evaluation of the programmes can be sometimes very difficult.

### Country:

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

There are not enough professionals trained for work with perpetrators. Our association is the only NGO working with perpetrators of violence in Slovenia. The professionals working in centres for social work do work with perpetrators but are usually not trained and therefore not as efficient.

There are regional differences which should be lessened. Sometimes, for example, it depends on a single person in a justice department if a person will be sent to our programme or not. In some regions of Slovenia, there are no programmes for perpetrators at all.

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?)

Slovenia has made three important changes to legislation concerning work with perpetrators of violence. The first occurred when the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA) was passed in 2008. It introduced the Coordinated Approach in the field of domestic violence prevention (described in detail later on). The second important legislative change happened with the 2009 amendment to Article 191 of the penal code, which criminalised domestic violence as an independent offense. Amendments to articles that specify sanctions, especially the suspended sentence under protective supervision, have also been important for referring individuals to programmes for perpetrators. They enabled the court to specify the appropriate instructions (obligatory treatment/therapy, attending psychological counselling or social skills trainings, etc.). We have noticed that issuing such instructions in combination with suspended sentences has become increasingly frequent since 2010 and were consequently able to document a great increase in users referred to us by the court. External motivation drives most of these perpetrators to cooperate in the programme, as they fear that their suspended sentences might otherwise be revoked.

There were also important changes in the penal code in 2015, for example stalking was criminalised as an independent offense.



And the third important change of legislation was made in 2016 when the second Domestic Violence Prevention Act was passed (DVPA-A). With this act, amongst other changes, Slovenia prohibited corporal punishment of children. Additionally, non-participation in court-ordered programmes has negative consequences for the perpetrator in all procedures under the Family Violence Act.

Please tell us the progress your country has made in relation to Istanbul Convention (particularly Article 16 on work with perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence/abuse).

The Istanbul Convention was ratified in February 2015. The change of legislation of Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA-A) was made in 2016. With this act, amongst other changes, Slovenia prohibited corporal punishment of children. With this change in the legislation non-participation in mandatory programmes constitutes an aggravating circumstance for a perpetrator in all procedures under the Family Violence Act.

Furthermore, in all procedures, connected to criminal acts of violence, alternative dispute solving (such as mediation) is prohibited.

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

There are no other organisations/programmes specialised in perpetrator work. As detailed above, some social work centres offer non-specialised support.

**Best practice:-**

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

Our greatest achievement in the last 3 years is the fact that we have succeeded in expanding the Social Skills Training programme throughout Slovenia. Alongside Ljubljana (2004), the programme is now carried out in eight other Slovenian cities: Koper (2009), Celje (2010), Novo mesto (2010), Slovenj Gradec (2010), Nova Gorica (2011), Murska Sobota (2011), Maribor (2015) and Radovljica (2015).

In 2016, the programme engaged 580 perpetrators from all over Slovenia, which established it as the most prominent national programme in the field of working with perpetrators of domestic violence. We have established cooperative relationships with all state institutions (centres for social work, the police, schools, the public prosecutor's office, courts), which have been referring an increasing number of perpetrators to our programmes. SST thus became an integrated part of an intervention system and its practitioners actively participate in inter-agency alliances and networks against domestic violence in order to achieve a coordinated approach to domestic violence (e.g.: multidisciplinary teams, information sharing).



What this means in practice is that courts are ordering conditional convictions with instructions to attend SST and prosecutors are implementing so called postponed prosecutions with the obligation to attend SST programme.

The greatest achievement in the field of domestic violence prevention has been the implementation of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, which defined the legal framework for the Coordinated Approach. It has also made participation of involved institutions (centres for social work, the police, schools, NGO's, etc.) obligatory when dealing with situations of domestic violence. All involved institutions have consequently begun to approach the issues of domestic violence in a more coordinated manner. Ideally, the burden and responsibility for intervening in the event of a violent situation is taken over by the agencies as opposed to the victim. They are thus tasked with ensuring the victim's safety, holding the perpetrators responsible for their actions and confronting them with the consequences for their actions.

With our SST programme, the benefits of following a coordinated approach are evident on multiple levels. Since its implementation, the various institutions have not only been referring new users to our association, they have also begun to provide us with more detailed and comprehensive information, which is crucial to planning our individual work with perpetrators. Having comprehensive data, it is much easier to make risk assessments. These are, whenever possible, made available to the victim and/or the organisation where the victim has sought support.

### Needs and recommendations:-

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

There is still a large need for the following:

Developing new specialised programmes for working with perpetrators of violence, for example specialised programs for perpetrators with **addictions**, specialised programs for perpetrators with **mental health problems** or different **disabilities**, as well as programs for perpetrators of criminal offenses against the sexual integrity of children **under the age of 16**.

Increased collaboration with institutions (courts, prosecutors) is required for the purpose of information exchange. Additionally, consequences should be applied when perpetrators fail to finish mandatory programmes.

Collaboration with centres for education within the judicial system, e.g. in the field of education of judges is needed, particularly in cases of revocation of conditional sentences when violating instructions of the conviction.



Increasing programme standards with the purpose of increasing victim safety: better collaboration between programmes for perpetrators and programmes for victims of violence with the goal of information exchange, preventing manipulation and better victim protection. We don't have victim support programmes in all the cities in which we carry out our SST programme.

Regular trainings for professionals working in the field of violence on the topic of 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?

The most important task is to increase preventive work, especially workshops and lectures for youth to decrease the overall tolerance and normalisation of violence in the family and intimate partnership violence.

In addition, collaboration with centres for education within the judicial system, e.g. in the field of education of judges, is sorely needed, particularly in cases of revocation of conditional sentences when violating instructions of the conviction. Practices in those cases are extremely varied and often not sensitive to the specific circumstances and consequences of violence in the family.

