



WWP//EUROPEAN NETWORK

REPORT: 2018 WWP EN STUDY VISIT  
11-13 APRIL 2018  
GRAZ, AUSTRIA



[ Fachstelle für  
Gewaltarbeit ]

MÄNNER- UND GESCHLECHTERTHEMEN STEIERMARK

## Report on the 2018 Study Visit

Hosted by Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark

11-13 April 2018 in Graz, Austria,

### Participants, Organisers and Involved Organisations

The WWP EN Study Visit 2018 took place in Graz, Austria, on April 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>. It was hosted by the WWP EN member organisation *Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark* (“Association for Men’s and Gender Issues Styria”, AMGI).

The following colleagues took part in the study visit:



- **Dean Ajdukovic**, Society for Psychological Assistance (SPA), Croatia
- **Tim Dalton**, The Jenkins Centre (FreeVA), UK
- **Giorgi Grigolia**, Anti Violence Network of Georgia, Georgia
- **Valeriy Khoudoyash**, Crisis Center „HOPE“, Russia
- **Gregor Lapajne**, Association for nonviolent communication, Slovenia
- **Lina Piskernik**, WAVE, Austria
- **Anastasia Savva**, Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family, Cyprus
- **Bledar Zeneli**, Counseling Line for Men and Boys, Albania

The organisation team in Graz consisted of Christian Scambor, Annemarie Siegl, Alexander Bernhard, Stefan Pawlata and Elli Scambor.

Dietlind Schröder from the WWP-office was supporting the organisation team and Anna McKenzie, the WWP EN Communication Manager joined as a participating staff member.

Marina Sorgo, Barbara Jauk, Susanne Pekler and Michaela Gosch, with their respective teams, supported the excursions to various organisations in Graz.

The organisation team of AMGI wants to thank all those who helped make the WWP-EN-Study Visit 2018 an interesting and educating event!

In this year's study visit, the focus was on a network of co-operating regional organisations that work against domestic violence:

- [Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark](#) (Association for Men's and Gender Issues, Styria; AMGI) works with perpetrators in general, incl. perpetrators of domestic violence;
- [Gewaltschutzzentrum Steiermark](#) (Violence Protection Centre Styria) provides support for victims of domestic violence;
- [Verein Frauenhäuser Steiermark](#) (Women's Shelters Styria) manages two shelters for women and their kids;
- [Verein Neustart](#) (formerly the Association for Probation Service and Social Work) operates throughout Austria, providing work with perpetrators within the court system.



### The Austrian Legal Framework

As part of the study visit, the organisation team explained and discussed the legal framework in Austria, concerning domestic violence. The *Austrian Federal Act on Protection against Domestic Violence* goes back to 1997 and includes protection of victims by the police, by civil law, measures under criminal law and victims' rights. The Violence Intervention Centre in Vienna has published an overview in various languages: <https://www.interventionsstelle-wien.at/gewaltschutzbrochuere>.

One of the core elements of the Act on Protection against Domestic Violence is the *barring order* (1)<sup>1</sup> according to the *Security Police Act*. In case of domestic violence, the police will evict the perpetrator from the house or flat, and the victims can remain. The barring order is valid for two weeks; victims can apply for a prolongation at the district court. In case of a barring order, the police have to send various information (e.g. the contact address of the victim) to the regional *Violence Protection Centre* (2), who pro-actively contact the victim and offer their support (counselling, legal advice, risk assessment etc.) (3). In cases in which children are involved, the police also sends data to the *Child Welfare Authority*. (2)

<sup>1</sup> The numbers refer to diagram 1, see below.

Despite the possibility of a barring order by the police, there are still many situations when women victims and their children decide to go to the *Womens' Shelter*. (9)

Concerning the perpetrators, the police officers can refer them to organisations that provide perpetrator programmes, especially the *Men's Counselling Centre*. This referral is on a voluntary basis. (4)



Apart from the barring order, the victim or the police (e.g. in case of bodily injury) can press charges against the perpetrator (5). In this case, the public prosecutor and the criminal court come into play (6). Public prosecutors may suggest

mediation in penal matters (provided by the organisation *Neustart*) (7), or hand the case to the criminal court. There, the victims are accompanied and supported by victim supporting organisations. In case of a conviction, a perpetrator may get a court order to regularly meet a probation officer, to attend an anti-violence training (provided by *Neustart*) or sometimes to attend psychotherapeutic interventions (provided e.g. by *Men's Counselling Centre*)<sup>2</sup> (8). The latter is also the case if perpetrators have attended training programs or psychotherapy in jail, provided by *Men's Counselling Centre*, and if they are on parole later on, with a court order to continue the intervention at *Men's Counselling Centre*.

### Regional Cooperation within the Austrian System

As thoroughly discussed during the study visit, the above-mentioned organisation cooperate in many ways. To mention some of the most important forms of cooperation:

- The *Violence Protection Centre* and the *Men's Counselling Centre* coordinate working with the perpetrator and the victim by exchanging information (based on an agreement to allow the exchange of information by both perpetrator and victim). (10)
- A similar cooperation exists between the *Violence Protection Centre* and *Verein Neustart* for perpetrators with a court order to attend an anti-violence training. (11)

<sup>2</sup> Among other consequences



were compared to the respective situations in the participants' regions and countries. It became clear that regional approaches concerning the work with perpetrators and cooperation among institutions and organisations are not easy to compare. Even within one country with the same legal framework, regional implementation may vary. For example in Styria, Neustart is traditionally in charge of many anti-violence training groups, and there are many referrals from the court to these training groups. Consequently, the anti-violence training groups at the Men's Counselling Centre have lower numbers of court-referred clients, and higher number of self-referred, police-referred and Child Welfare Authority-referred clients (16). The different composition of the groups has implications for the work (e.g. in terms of motivation, which is often more intrinsic with self-referred perpetrators). Regional specifics play a role, as well. In the countryside, it can be much harder to establish training groups, due to a low number of referrals, and one-on-one-settings may be the more practical approach outside of cities.

### Excursions

The participants and the hosts visited all four organisations: the Women's Shelter on April 11<sup>th</sup>;



Neustart and Men's Counselling Centre/AMGI on April 12<sup>th</sup>. The conference room used during the study visit was at the office of the Violence Protection Centre, and their presentation took place on April 13<sup>th</sup>.

These excursions were completed by a presentation at the [Hans-Groß-Criminal-Museum](#), University of Graz, on April 12<sup>th</sup>. There, the participants gained insights into historic forensic methods of investigation. The museum was founded 1896 by the legal expert Hans Groß as a collection of teaching materials for the education of students, judges and criminal police officers. The first standardized kit for crime scene investigation was described in a publication by Groß in 1893, and it is part of today's collection at the Criminal Museum.

### Plenary Sessions

In the plenary sessions, the participants discussed a variety of subjects. Among other contributions, the following topic deserves special attention:

In a letter to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Thorbjørn Jagland, 333 NGOs opposed the use of the term *gender* in the Istanbul Convention and complained about “ideological parts of the Convention” (cit. from the letter to Mr. Jagland). Several participants reported anti-feminist or anti-gender discourses in their countries and interpreted the letter in this sense.

There was also time for the participants to present their organisations and to tell about innovative projects in their countries, to compare their approaches, programs and cooperation. The contributions by all participants resulted in an interesting and fruitful study visit, as was repeatedly expressed in the final feedback round.

Further pictures of the 2018 WWP EN Study Visit are on the WWP EN [Facebook Page](#).



Graz, Austria

May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018

Christian Scambor

for the organisation team and AMGI

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