

Press release

15 June 2021 - World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

MARVOW Project partners remind about the importance of multi-agency collaboration in fighting abuse against older women

Violence against older people is a serious social problem worldwide. Although it affects all genders, women are disproportionately affected. Older women are usually exposed to a higher risk of violence not only because of their age, but also gender. This type of violence is not properly prioritized, it is hidden under shame and stigma, which together with the lack of adequate services contributes to the low reporting rates.¹

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day aims at providing an opportunity to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic, and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.² The MARVOW partners join the campaign to specifically shed the light on older women victims of abuse and the importance of multi-agency collaboration of all agencies involved in the process.

Violence against older women is invisible

Older women are often confronted with various forms of neglect - physical, psychological, medical, and social. It is a form of violence that is often not visible enough and therefore hardly considered. Older people come across many barriers which make it much less likely for the violence to be recognized, reported, and stopped. The MARVOW Project aims at raising awareness and ensuring that older victims of violence are recognized and receive the support they need.

An important instrument in fighting violence against older women is increasing the knowledge of its specifics in all agencies involved and ensuring that those agencies collaborate on such cases.

Multi-agency collaboration is important

The EU co-funded project MARVOW (Multi-Agency Responses to Violence against Older Women) deals with the problem of gender-based violence against women and is developing the first multi-institutional model for older victims of violence and perpetrators of violence against older women. The project team conducts case conferences for older victims and develops a range of innovative methods to support the model, following a needs-based approach and involving stakeholders.

¹ World Health Organization (2017), *Elder Abuse Factsheet*, www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs357/en/

² <https://worldelderabuseawareness.com/about-weaad/>



Over the past year the project team has been creating cooperation networks specifically dealing with cases of violence against older women, involving elderly care services, social workers, health care providers, police, or victim protection groups. The participants receive training on the topic, exchange best practices and develop common solutions to common problems. Since late 2020 the model is being implemented in several regions of Austria, Estonia, and Greece. The project brought together over 300 stakeholders, with just the first local trainings being attended by almost 150 professionals.

Involved stakeholders are introduced to the multi-agency cooperation approach for cases of violence against older women, especially through two approaches: system-wide meetings and case conferences. System-wide meetings are an opportunity to discuss the challenges in the system that agencies must confront to meet the different needs of older victims and their abusers, as well as opportunities for improved services. On the other hand, case conferences meetings treat cases of violence against older women and allow participating agencies to exchange information and plan a common approach.

Overall conclusion

Cases of violence against women and femicide still fill the news day by day. The incidence of violence against older people is also alarming, especially if we consider that it is hardly visible and considered.

“We need a network of all the involved institutions in order to identify victims and provide them with support at the right time. That is why projects such as MARVOW are so important”, said one of the stakeholders joining MARVOW’s meetings in Austria.

On the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day MARVOW Partners express the urgency of establishing multi-agency collaboration with the specific approach to tackle violence against older women.

Follow [MARVOW’s Facebook page](#) and [website](#) to check our upcoming activities and do not hesitate to get in touch with the project partners if you have additional questions!





Project partners in Austria, Greece, Estonia, and Germany:

Association of Autonomous Austrian Shelters (AÖF), Austria, Maria Rösslhumer,
maria.roesslhumer@aoef.at

Union of Women Associations of Heraklion Prefecture (UWAH), Greece, Nicholas
Spetsidis, projects@kakopoiisi.gr

Women's Support and Information Centre, (WSIC) Estonia, Pille Tsopp-Pagan,
pille.tsopp-pagan@naistetugi.ee

University of Tartu, Estonia, Hector Pagan, hector@ut.ee

European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (WWP),
Dimitra Mintsidis d.mintsidis@work-with-perpetrators.eu

Women against Violence Europe (WAVE), Austria, Elena Floriani, elena.floriani@wave-network.org

