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Neighbourhoods Uniting Against Domestic Violence: Empowering Communities to Take Action

Domestic violence – no longer a private issue

The alarming results of the EU gender-based violence survey¹ show that 1 out of every 3 women in the EU have experienced physical violence, threats, and/or sexual violence over their lifetime; for nearly 1 in 5 women, the perpetrator is an intimate partner. Yet, the full scale of violence against women remains hidden, as many victims remain silent, unable or unwilling to seek help.

To break the silence, change must start in our own communities. The StoP! approach shows us how domestic violence can be prevented by educating and organizing local communities, empowering individuals to recognise and react to incidents of domestic and gender-based violence in their neighbourhoods, and to tap into the power. It is a practical way to foster an environment where survivors feel supported while perpetrators are held accountable. Developed in Germany in 2006 and later expanded to Austria, the StoP model operates in 60 local communities. Over the past two years, the StoP! team has focused on expanding the model to France, Belgium, the Czech Republic, and Romania. They have developed the StoP Toolbox and curriculum for international use, aiming to scale the approach across the EU. Additionally, they have laid the groundwork and trained local stakeholders to support future replication of the programme in partner countries. The StoP Toolbox is the culmination of these efforts.

¹ FRA, EIGE, Eurostat (2024), EU gender-based violence survey – Key results. Experiences of women in the EU-27, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Taking action with practical solutions – launch of the StoP Toolbox

The StoP! approach equips communities with the knowledge and strategies needed to prevent intimate partner violence and its escalations. The Stop Toolbox is an online resource designed for community organisers who want to learn 1. how to create safer, more supportive neighbourhoods for those experiencing abuse, and 2. how to apply simple yet powerful actions anyone can take to stand against violence and really make a difference.

Explore the toolkit here: <https://stop-toolbox.eu/>

About the initiative

Funded by the European Union, the StoP! Community Matters project (2023-2025) is expanding this proven neighbourhood-based model across Europe. Bringing together partners from six EU countries, the project aims to share best practices and offer a step-by-step actionable approach, paving the way for violence-free neighbourhoods.

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