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TACTICS

Regional Report on existing Domestic
Violence Response System between police
and professionals

Germany

GESINE Intervention

Contents

Overview of existing domestic violence response system for multi-agency collaboration	2
1.1 Indicators.....	2
1.1.2 Proportion of domestic violence cases reported to the police	2
1.1.3 Percentage Data: Offense structure for intimate partner violence (PCS 2022: 6):	2
1.1.4 Proportion of survivors of domestic violence using police services.....	3
1.2 Data	3
1.3 Overview of Advisory Groups performed	6
Interviews.....	6
2.1 Summary of Victim Advisory Group.....	6
2.2 Summary of Perpetrator Advisory Group	8
2.3 Summary of Police Advisory Group.....	9
2.4 Summary of Other Professional Advisory Group.....	9
Summary of WP2 work activities / Conclusion and recommendations	18
3.1 Victims.....	18
3.2 Person in a perpetrator programme.....	18
3.3 Organisations who work with victims	19
3.4 Organisation who work with perpetrators	20
Appendices.....	20

Overview of existing domestic violence response system for multi-agency collaboration

1.1 Indicators

1.1.2 Proportion of domestic violence cases reported to the police

The German Police Crime Statistic (PCS)¹ of 2022 depicts exclusively the police activities and is thus strongly influenced by the reporting behaviour of the population.

In 2022, a total number of 157,818 victims of partner violence offenses were recorded in Germany. This is an increase of 9.1% compared to 2021 (PCS 2022: 14).

Of the 157,818 victims of intimate partner violence, most were recorded as victims of intentional actual bodily harm (93,546), followed by threats, stalking and coercion (38,227), and aggravated bodily harm or assault resulting in death (18,582 in total). Furthermore, 3,982 victims of sexual assault, sexual coercion and rape, and 1,810 victims of deprivation of liberty were recorded.

A total of 390 persons were recorded as victims of murder and homicide (0.2%). The number of victims in completed murder and homicide was 142, of which 126 were female and 16 male. In addition, there were seven cases of bodily harm resulting in death due to intimate partner violence in which women were victims and three cases with male victims. Thus, 133 women and 19 men were victims of intimate partner violence resulting in death.

In 2022, a total of 6,587 suspects of crimes under § 4 of the Protection against Violence Act² were registered, of which 91.7% were male (6,041) and 8.3% female (546). Compared to the previous year, the number of suspects in this area increased by 6.9% (2021: 6,161) (male: +6.0%, female: +17.9%) (PCS 2022: 16).

1.1.3 Percentage Data: Offense structure for intimate partner violence (PCS 2022: 6):

- 59.3% Intentional simple bodily injury
- 24.2% Threats, stalking, coercion
- 11.7 % aggravated bodily injury

¹ In German: Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik (PKS)

² In German: § 4 Gewaltschutzgesetz (GewSchG). This law is the legal basis for ordering judicial measures to protect the victim against the violent person in cases of intentional and unlawful injury to the body, health or freedom of a person, including threats of such injury. In particular, these protective measures include prohibitions on contact, proximity, harassment and entering the home. Pursuant to Section 4 of the GewSchG, the contravention of the order is punishable. Source: PCS 2022: 35)

- 2.5% Rape, sex. coercion, sex. assault
- 0.2 % Murder and homicide
- 2.1 % Other offences

1.1.4 Proportion of survivors of domestic violence using police services

Extract of the PCS 2022 (PCS 2022: 5-6):

Domestic violence:

- 240,547 (2021: 221,615; +8.5%) victims of domestic violence, of which 71.1 % were female (171,076) and 28.9 % were male (69,471).
- 65.6% of victims (157,818) were affected by intimate partner violence, and 34.4% were affected by violence within the family (82,729 victims)
- 25.4 % of all victims recorded in the PKS (948,043) are victims of domestic violence (240,547)
- 197,348 (2021: 181,931; +8.5 %) suspects: 76.3% male (150,633) and 23.7% female (46,715) crime suspects

Intimate partner violence:

- 157,550 (2021: 144,044; +9.4%) cases of intimate partner violence with 157,818 (2021: 144,637; +9.1%) victims, of which 80.1% are female (126,349) and 19.9% are male (31,469)
- 16.6% of all victims recorded in the PCS are victims of intimate partner violence (157,818)
- Victim-Perpetrator relationship: 39.5 % former partners, 31.1% spouses and partners, 29.1% partners in a non-marital partnership, 0.3% registered civil partnership
- 129,332 (2021:118,148; +9.47 %) suspects: 78.3% male (101,323) and 21.7% female (28,009) suspects.

1.2 Data

By the time of submission, we were able to collect the following data with the help of the local police department:

- **Does the local police department use DV risk assessment tools?**

Yes, but more a general danger assessment for any kind of dangerous situation, not DV in specific. This danger assessment is obligatory for the federal state of Northrhine-Westphalia. There is no special rule or risk assessment tool for cases of DV. However, there is a decree by the federal state that defines the necessity of cooperation with women counselling centres. Whether a tool like “Danger Assessment” after Campbell (or similar) is being used, depends on the individual police officer.

▪ **Are there peak times for calls to the police in connection with domestic violence? If so, what do they look like?**

No separate data is collected on this.

▪ **Are there specially trained police officers who investigate domestic violence cases in your country or area?**

Cases of domestic violence are processed in the specialist police stations with regional components. The officers work in the respective teams and receive local and central training (courses) in the field of DV.

- **If yes: how many?**

Criminal investigation department 4³: 4 case officers

Criminal investigation department 5⁴: 6 case officers

- **If yes: what constitutes this special training?**

The training courses generally cover legal measures and options in particular. Aspects of police tactics are also covered. Psychosocial aspects are also examined from the perspective of the perpetrator, the victim and other persons (e.g. children). Cooperation with network partners (e.g. youth welfare office, advice centers, women's shelters, etc.) is also an essential part of the courses.

▪ **Number of bail conditions for perpetrators of domestic violence to protect victims**

No information can be provided here.

▪ **Number of restriction orders carried out in 2022 (Ennepe-Ruhr county)⁵**

250

▪ **Number of referrals/referrals to women's counselling in 2022**

265

³ Criminal Investigation Department 4 handles the regional processing of the following crimes in Hattingen, Sprockhövel, Wetter und Herdecke: Assault offenses, street crime, juvenile delinquency, property crimes, crimes against the elderly. Source: <https://ennepe-ruhr-kreis.polizei.nrw/direktion-kriminalitaet-5>

⁴ Criminal Investigation Department 5 deals with the regional processing of the following crimes in Ennepetal, Schwelm, Breckerfeld und Gevelsberg : Assault offenses, street crime, juvenile delinquency, property crimes. Source: *ibid.*

⁵ All numbers that follow in in this chapter refer to the Ennepe-Ruhr county.

▪ **Number of referrals/referrals to “Weißer Ring”⁶ in 2022**

10

▪ **Number of referrals/referrals to the youth welfare office in 2022**

Referrals to the youth welfare office are not determined separately. There is a cooperation agreement between the county police department of the city Schwelm and the municipalities. Automatic notification is sent to the relevant youth welfare offices in cases where children live in the affected households. The notification is carried out by the investigating officers.

▪ **Number of referrals/referrals to other institutions in 2022, if yes, which ones?**

There were only referrals to the local women's counselling service and "Weißer Ring". For the number, see above.

▪ **Number of referrals of victims to hospitals / the medical sector in 2022**

There was no specific referral from the local office. Injured victims of DV are given first aid in the field until the emergency doctor arrives.

▪ **Was there an inter-agency high-risk conference between the police and cooperation partners in 2022?**

No.

▪ **How many victims reported to the police after repeated violence in 2022?**

Eight victims of repeated domestic violence were identified. The victims did not contact the police of their own accord. Contact was made on the initiative of the police.

▪ **How long does a domestic violence intervention take on average?**

Every intervention is individual in terms of time. This also depends on follow-up measures. In particular, a longer time frame is required when it comes to detentions, arrests and searches.

▪ **Number of police officers in your department who have received training on domestic violence**

Some of the officers have received training. It is not possible for the local department to provide an exact figure.

⁶ The German network „Weißer Ring“ (engl.: *White Ring*) was founded to support victims of crimes to get financial and psychosocial support. It has a close cooperation to the local police departments. More information (in German): <https://weisser-ring.de/>

1.3 Overview of Advisory Groups performed

We conducted 9 interviews.

Moreover, we had two advisory panel meeting in November: one with victim support organizations, one with perpetrator support organizations. The next meetings with these groups will take place in February.

- a. Mode: online or in person / focus group or interviews / duration
 - i. In person
 - ii. Single interviews
 - iii. Duration: 25-60mins
- b. Number of participants by gender
 - i. Male: 3
 - ii. Female: 6

Interviews

2.1 Summary of Victim Advisory Group

We conducted **two interviews with female victims** of DV and asked them about the police operation they were involved in.

What works well

Interviewpartner (IP) 1 points out that she had no issues understanding the information she got from the police. However, it is important to mention that she is a native speaker.

IP 2 had no German skills when the police operation happened. Despite communication challenges as outlined below, she emphasizes that the police “did everything right” by getting her out of the situation and driving her directly to a women’s shelter. Perpetrator and victim were interviewed separately by the police (1 female, 1 male officer). She reports that the female police officer tried to communicate with her with easy language and acted very “considerately”. Though IP 2 was not able to explain herself while the perpetrator spoke fluently German, she mentions that the police interpreted the situation correctly, which she thinks might be due to her visible injuries.

What are challenges

IP 1 criticizes a lack of empathy regarding her situation during the operation. The police acted very objectively. The officers didn’t take a seat with her to have a conversation although she was visibly injured. Everything was done standing in the hallway. Despite heavy injuries, she

wasn't brought to the hospital and wasn't asked if she needed an ambulance. No documentation through photographs. She wasn't asked if she needs a place in a women's shelter although she would have liked to leave the place. The IP did not feel that a proper danger assessment of the situation was made. After the police left after few minutes, the woman felt "lost".

Furthermore, IP 1 criticizes the fact that she wasn't informed about the legal procedure at all and there was no restraining order for the perpetrator. Only later she found out through the victim consulting center that the police could have performed legal actions.

She later found out that the perpetrator obtained information about perpetrator programmes through his own initiative, not by the police.

As **IP 2** had no German language skills by the time of the police operation, she reports to have been very scared when the police took her to the car. By that time, she did not know they will bring her to a shelter. As the perpetrator threatened her with deportation if she calls the police, she assumed they will bring her to a prison. Thereby, IP 2 mentions that it would have been helpful to receive information material in her native language where it is explained what will happen to her, where she can get support etc. She wasn't informed about legal possibilities and what do to next. Later, a woman in the shelter who spoke her language helped her out and explained the procedure to her.

Although IP 2 emphasizes how helpful it was to be brought to a women's shelter, she reports that the police just "dropped" her by the front door and she did not know what to do.

No injuries were documented.

The perpetrator did not receive any information / referral.

Both IP mention that the perpetrators were alcoholised during the escalation.

Recommendations for improvement

During the police operation, **IP 1** would have liked more support regarding her injuries, like asking further questions or proposing to bring her to a hospital. She would have liked the police to sit down with her and take more time. Moreover, a contact person with whom she can talk about her situation, or at least information on victim support services, would have been helpful. IP1 refers to an emergency helpline where she gets direct support as one helpful option. In general, she mentions the need of more empathy, more information on legal actions like restraining orders and referral to support services. Furthermore, she considered information on the current residence of the perpetrator helpful.

For improvement, **IP 2** suggests to receive information brochures in different languages during the police operation. The information material should include information on nearby support services and legal aspects. Moreover, public information on DV in several languages would help (possible) victims to get general information whenever they have the chance. A person

especially in charge for DV issues on site during the police operation is considered to be even more helpful.

2.2 Summary of Perpetrator Advisory Group

We conducted **one interview with a man** who is currently in a **perpetrator programme**.

What works well

The IP reports that he was satisfied with the behaviour of the police during the operation. He points out that the two police officers talked in a way that calmed him down, which was, he assumes, due to the fact that after the violent act against his partner he threatened to commit suicide. The police called an ambulance. Although he was under high influence of alcohol, he emphasized positively that he understood the officers very well. German is the native language of the IP. Since by that time the police arrived the IP had already left the apartment, he and his partner were interviewed separately. As another positive aspect, the IP mentions that there was no “power demonstration” on the side of the police. Altogether, he mentions that the operation was justifiable because of the fact that he committed violence and showed suicidal behaviour.

What are challenges

Since the IP left the apartment after the act of violence, the police did not charge a restraining order. The IP mentions that there was no explanation regarding (possible) legal actions. He also reports that he didn't receive information on support services like a perpetrator programme, but organized this himself weeks later. Although he emphasized positively that the police called an ambulance due to the fact he threatened to commit suicide, he criticizes at this point that he was just “forwarded” to the paramedic. With the paramedic, the IP was told to discuss further steps like how to get “psychological or further help”. The police did not specify what kind of help was meant. He was not asked if a perpetrator programme should contact him. After the IP was asked if he would have preferred to get information of perpetrator programmes that day, he mentions that he is unsure whether he could have processed the information because of his mental state (suicidal tendency and alcoholised). The IP has no information if his partner got information on support services that day. The victim charged a file, but withdrew it later. The IP mentions that by the day of the precharging, a female police officer calmed him down and said that “nothing will happen anyway”.

Recommendations for improvement

The IP criticizes he was forwarded to the paramedic without receiving further information on psychological help. He had to get information on this by himself afterwards. After being one night in a hospital, the doctor discharged him without giving him information of further help although he was there because of suicidal thoughts. After 3-4 weeks he got information on the perpetrator programme with the help of another doctor.

2.3 Summary of Police Advisory Group

At the time of reporting, we were not able to conduct interviews with the local police yet. This was due to structural and bureaucratic hurdles.

Back in September, GESINE had another cooperation meeting with the district police authority of the Ennepe-Ruhr county, which had previously agreed to become our associated partner. In this meeting, the Head of the Crime Directorate and the Victim Protection Officer continued to show great interest and support. The Head of the Crime Directorate, Mr. Pieper, would also like to make TACTICS known at the level of the State Criminal Police Office⁷ and receive support from this higher level. At this stage, cooperation is likely, but no firm commitment can yet be made by the relevant authorities.

GESINE is endeavoring to incorporate the information and experience from the police at a later stage of the project.

2.4 Summary of Other Professional Advisory Group

We interviewed **five professionals who work regularly with victims**: one from a victim consulting center, one from a women's shelter, one from a child guidance center, two professionals from youth welfare centers (in the following distinguished through the letters A and B).

We also conducted **one interview** with a person **who works with men in a perpetrator programme**. She works in that program with men who have become violent towards their partners.

What works well

The IP from the victim consultation center emphasized a good cooperation with the local victim protection officer from the police, especially when it comes to the exchange of information and agreements. The center receives a fax from the police whenever there was a police operation in connection with DV, so that the social workers can pro-actively contact the victim and provide short-dated intervention as well as long-term support. When it comes to the cooperation with the local police department in general, the IP pointed out that the procedure of restraining orders works well most of the time. However, in the past time the

⁷ In German: Landeskriminalamt (LKA)

cooperation worsened, which will be explained below (“challenges” & “data sharing challenges”).

The IP from the women’s shelter reports that most of the time, the victims ask for a space in the shelter by themselves. Therefore, there is no standardized procedure together with the police. However, there are situations where the police drive the victim directly to the women’s shelter. This happens individually depending on the situation of the victim and the case worker and is welcomed by all parties.

The IP from youth welfare office A emphasizes on a good cooperation with the police in cases on DV when children are involved. They receive a fax with information on the involved children. The police calls the case workers for child protection advice and sometimes asks them to come to the site. The victim support, however, almost stops after referral to victim support organizations.

The IP from youth welfare office B mentions a standardized procedure with the police when children are involved. For the victim, support like socio-pedagogical family assistance or ambulant service can be implemented if needed.

The IP from the child guidance center reports that there is nothing like a “good practice” within the organization in cases of DV; challenges are described below.

The IP from the perpetrator program points out positively that most of the men come to the programme voluntarily and by their own initiative. In addition to this, the cooperation with the family courts and the youth welfare offices extended. This leads to the fact that more perpetrators get referred to the programme or the participation is required by contract. Another good cooperation exists with the local victim protections officer from the police. Even though the IP points out that the contact between the police and perpetrator programme is not regularly, individual cases can be addressed and measures discussed in an unbureaucratic manner if necessary. Moreover, the IP mentions that there is existing multiagency approach - theoretically. Practically, the implementation is difficult or non-existent.

What are challenges

The professional from the victim consultation center points out that the documentation of the police often lacks important information, as it will be explained below more detailed (“Data sharing challenges”). Sometimes there was no data exchange after a DV police operation, or the assessment on-site was “wrong”. The IP refers to situations where the victim got a restraining order instead of the perpetrator, because the perpetrator called the police first. Situations like this arise especially when the victim doesn’t speak German very well. In general, the IP stresses the fact that the content of the documentation the center receives from the police may vary from very extensive to very briefly.

The IP from the women's shelter criticizes the fact that the police doesn't feel responsible for the victim anymore as soon as she has arrived in the shelter – the longer the victim is in the shelter, the less likely the police shows interest in the case. The professionals from the shelter don't get any information on further procedure, only if they actively contact the police. Regarding this problem, the IP points out the need for more communication between all involved parties and clear procedures and responsibilities between the shelter and the police. Moreover, the IP reports that the cooperation may vary in every city or county which leads to more difficulties regarding the implementation of a clear procedure.

Both IPs from the victim support organizations mention further difficulties when minor children and the youth welfare office are involved. They describe situations in their everyday practice where the mother is seen as the parent who is mainly responsible for the child's wellbeing and is therefore pressured by the youth welfare office to separate from the perpetrator. In situations where the mother didn't organize separation, change of residence, seek shelter etc. the youth welfare office demanded emergency removal of the minor children. In contradiction to this, after the separation the mother is pressured to organize the contact with the father since the German Domestic Relations law demands child contact with both parents. The IP from the victim consultation center criticizes that the safety of the victim loses its importance in this phase, although post-separation abuse like manipulation, threatening and stalking is a regular and constantly reported problem.

The IP from the youth welfare A office criticizes situations where the police didn't inform them via fax although it would have been necessary for the child. Here, a standardized procedure where the police always calls the youth welfare center when there is a DV police operation to compare the risk assessment is considered to be helpful. The IP points out that young professionals from the police often lack experience in terms of DV, moreover, the IP criticizes a "rough" communication from the side of the police.

One of the biggest challenges identified by the IP is clarity regarding the different responsibilities between the various support services. Moreover, the IP stresses that their responsibility ends for the victim after referring her to victim support organizations or lawyers. In individual cases, they support the victim to get a restraining order. In cases of substance abuse, the perpetrator is referred to a perpetrator programme.

The IP from youth welfare office B criticizes the fact that the police report (fax) often arrives very late although there is a clear procedure. Sometimes they receive the report weeks later, sometimes they don't receive it at all, which leads to the fact that the youth welfare office is no longer able to provide immediate help. The IP mentions that to avoid child endangerment, the mother has the main responsibility to ensure her children's safety and therefore has to "make sure that violence doesn't happen anymore".

The IP from the child guidance center mentions the lack of agency they have in cases of DV. The support they can offer towards the victim ends with referral to victim support organisations and police. However, the IP mentions that the focus always lies at child protection; “a woman who can’t save herself is a potential danger for the child”. A cooperation with the local youth welfare offices is more regular, however, not standardised. The IP criticizes that the youth welfare case workers often assesses cases differently (less severely).

The IP from the perpetrator program outlines existing challenges when it comes to multi-agency collaboration. Although there are attempts for a cooperation with other institutions in some cases, it is difficult to find a common ground. There is no (or lacking) interdisciplinary cooperation, like regular exchange meetings to discuss a case and the potential endangerment. Another problematic issue is the fact that the police does not refer perpetrators to the programme, nor gives a recommendation. In the event of changing employees, the cooperation has to be rebuilt from the ground. The IP mentions that it took years to implement a data exchange with one of the local police offices.

The cooperation with the youth welfare offices is reported to be challenging as well. While some cases acknowledge the fact that DV is a potential child endangerment, others don’t. The IP outlines critically that many youth welfare offices do not inform themselves about perpetrator strategies and “fall for their manipulative behaviour”. As a major problem, the IP scrutinizes that there is a low conviction rate in Germany for violence, and especially for DV. The lawsuits are often dropped; complaints of sexual offences, for example, are often dropped because the judges blame the woman or downplay the perpetrator's guilt. Perpetrators can use violence with practically no legal consequences. Women often make use of their right to refuse to testify.

Risk Assessment/Case management tools used

The IP from the victim consultation center confirms the availability and usage of risk assessment tools. Mainly the tool “Danger Assessment” by Campbell is used, however, not routinely in every consultation. The IP highlights that the consultation center currently works on the standardization of high-risk assessment tools. The focus lies on the endangerment of the woman. The dangerousness of the man serves as an indicator.

As high-risk criteria, the following indicators were named: suicidality of the perpetrator, former hospitalization on a psychiatry, difficult life circumstances such as unemployment, addictive behaviour / substance abuse, strong jealousy (especially in combination with the fact that the victim has a new partner). The consultation center staff puts a lot of emphasis on the appraisal of the victim itself and the police. Nevertheless, sometimes the consultation center staff sees a higher risk than the victim itself, for example when there is evidence for the possession of weapons, concrete death threats, a special history of violence, heavy injuries, or heavy increase of violence.

The IP from the women's shelter also refers to the tool "Danger Assessment" by Campbell, therefore, uses the same criteria. In addition to this, the shelter staff counts so-called "8a-Reports"⁸ from the youth welfare office as a high-risk factor. The IP highlights that almost every query reveals that the particular woman is a high-risk case. However, the tool is not used routinely but more in the event of suspicion by the responsible employee of the shelter. Moreover, the IP mentions that the assessment of the youth welfare office, the police and the shelter employees may vary.

The IP from youth welfare office A reports that a standardized DV risk assessment is always conducted regarding the safety of the children. The following high-risk indicators are mentioned: frequency of the violence, injuries, did the children have to intervene, substance abuse of the parents, violence history in the family, police documentation from the operation, were the children directly or indirectly involved. As one of the first measures a house visit is taking place. This is part of the child protection procedure since DV is always assessed as child endangerment (§8a-Report). However, the IP reports that there is no such tool regarding the safety of the victim or the dangerousness of the perpetrator; the assessment is made according to the personal impression of the case worker. The following possible high-risk indicators are mentioned: substance abuse of the perpetrator, increasing violent behaviour, no impulse control of the perpetrator, previous police actions, crisis like unemployment or burn-out. Mostly, these indicators are determined together with the victim in a confidential consultation.

The IP from youth welfare office B mentions a form with standardized questions to evaluate the potential risk for the child. A child protection procedure is always initiated in cases of DV, including a house visit and consultation of the victim. However, similar to youth welfare office A, a risk assessment for the victim is not carried out regularly. The potential danger is evaluated by individual experience and "intuition" with regard to the following indicators: repeating violence prognosis, reversal of guilt, denial of violence and downplaying by the perpetrator. Both the victim and the perpetrator are asked about the situation. The focus always lies on the situation of the children: for example, the victim is asked how the safety of the children will be guaranteed in the future. Moreover, the youth welfare office includes existing files about the case into the assessment, e.g. when a previous act of violence was already registered.

The IP from the child guidance center reports that no standardized tools are used. The risk assessment is made within a confidential talk to the victim, there is no clear criteria. When asking for possible high-risk indicators, the IP mentions verbal threats and physical violence against the victim. For children, the center uses questionnaires, however, not routinely.

⁸ Official term: „§ 8a SGB VIII Schutzauftrag bei Kindeswohlgefährdung“. It's a legal procedure in Germany that enable youth welfare case worker to proceed safety measures in case of potential child endangerment, up to emergency removals.

For risk assessment, **the IP from the perpetrator program** mentions to use the tools Danger Assessment after Campbell, Ondara and Oktagon. Moreover, the IP names the following criteria for the identification of high risk cases: the duration, frequency and severity of violence, history of delinquency, personality type, possible disorder, ability to reason, possession of weapons, use of weapons in the past, stalking, overall impression after the initial interviews and the social history. Another aspect that is taken into account is what the victim and a social worker from the victim support center describes in an interview. Another aspect within the risk assessment is the immediate danger: If an immediate danger to the victim is identified, the police and the responsible victim protection officer are informed. In addition, the victim is contacted and the perpetrator is informed of the legal consequences of his actions. The IP gives the information that the clients who arrive in the programme do not come after the first violent act but were violent for many years.

Data sharing challenges

The victim consultation center has access to the following data when receiving a fax from the police: name, address, contact options, information on the accused person, children in the household, description of the situation when the police arrived, what kind of legal measures have been taken (e.g. restraining order). Moreover, the documentation includes information on possible language barriers (not regularly), previous restraining orders, injuries, whether an ambulance was called or not, whether injuries have been documented, whether the perpetrator was resisting, whether the organization “Weißer Ring” was contacted. The extent of the documentation may vary significantly depending on the case worker of the police department. As it is already mentioned above, the IP from the victim consultation center points out that the documentation of the police often misses out important information, for example the new address of the perpetrator, which is crucial for the deliverability of restraining orders. This leads to the situation that the victim has to find out the whereabouts of the perpetrator herself or the counsellors has to call the police to get relevant information. Moreover, information like previous complaints, repeating violence, what happens after the act (mandatory injunction, troublemaker speech...) etc. would be helpful if that works out with data protection.

The IP points out that there are also many cases where a victim comes to the counseling center without having had any previous police intervention. If there are indicators for a high-risk case and the victim gives her consent, the counsellor contacts the police. However, there are also many cases in which the victims do not want the police to become involved. Beyond the fax procedure, in cases of sexual crimes the police gets in contact with the victim consulting center to organize an appointment for the victim.

The IP from the women’s shelter points out that the shelter does not receive any information from the police, only from the victim. However, in some high-risk cases, for example in cases of forced prostitution, the police might get in contact with the shelter to exchange relevant information.

The IP mentions that often a case becomes a high-risk case only after separation. Then, it is possible that the staff contacts the police with the consent of the victim, for example when the victim wants to file a charge against the perpetrator. Moreover, there are individual situations where the police is involved, for example to secure the victim's safety at a court hearing.

Both IP's from the victim support services report that they have no further influence on the perpetrator, as the authority lies with the police (through legal actions) and the youth welfare office (through referral to perpetrator programmes to ensure child protection). However, the IP of the women's shelter points out that the cooperation with the youth welfare office can be difficult since the case workers often make an "incorrect" risk assessment for the victim. Both mention to cooperate⁹ with the following partners: Police (especially victim protection and case workers), youth welfare office case workers, doctors, clinics (especially in cases of sexualized violence), lawyers, forensic medicine, refugee assistance, employment agencies, social psychiatric service, assisted living, care takers. The women's shelter works additionally with school social workers and profamilia (non-governmental organisation for counselling related to sexual, pregnancy and companionship). However, a joint case management is only possible with a consent form of the victim, there is no standardized data exchange in cases of DV high-risk cases.

The IP from youth welfare office A repeats the good exchange with the police as the fax arrives within 48 hours after the operation. The documentation includes the name, age, nationality, address, how many children in the household, have they been directly involved, did they intervene, what happened on site, previous violence. More information on the victim (e.g. previous stay in a women's shelter) would be considered to be helpful. In addition to the police, schools or preschools sometimes report potential child endangerment through DV. The IP from youth welfare office A mentions an existing cooperation with the following institutions: police including the victim support protection, "Weißer Ring", victim consultation center, women's shelter, and the family court.

The IP from youth welfare office B criticizes, as already mentioned above, the delay of information exchange with the police in some cases despite an existing official procedure. The police documentation is sometimes missing out important information so that the case worker has to get in touch with the local department.

The IP from youth welfare office B mentions an existing cooperation with the police, local child and youth support services, victim consultation center and women's shelter, round table against DV.

⁹ The existing cooperations are mentioned in this chapter because a cooperation always means data exchange at some level (with the consent of the clients).

The IP from the child guidance center mentions that there is no data exchange with other institutions or the police at all. Sometimes, the youth welfare office gives a “hint” that there is a problem in the family, but no further information on the case. Most of the time, it is up to the employees to find out whether or not there is DV by talking to the parents. When DV is detected, the child guidance employees refer to victim support organisations and perpetrator programmes.

The IP only mentions an existing cooperation with the youth welfare offices in the region.

The IP from the perpetrator program indicates that either little or no data is exchanged with the police. There is no standardized procedure. The only data to be shared is the name and the residence. In some cases, the police gets in contact with the programme to share the information and/or set up a strategy. This happens, for example, in cases of gang criminality whenever DV is involved and the victim has to be protected. Whenever the social worker from the perpetrator programme identifies a high risk, the responsible police officer is contacted and informed. However, the IP mentions that normally the police already has the relevant personal data. If there is a risk of a repeat offense, the programme would ask the police and the victim protection officer to speak out a warning towards the perpetrator. In addition to the police, the IP reports that she cooperates with hospitals and therapists whenever the client gives the consent.

Recommendations for improvement

The IP of the victim consulting center emphasizes on the existing good cooperation between the center and the local police departments, however, would like to see an optimization of the intervention steps that occur after the first aid. Here, better cross-functional arrangements and procedures are desired. The IP stresses the importance of immediate action by the police when it comes to the violation of legal measures and regulations, such as restraining orders. This would be even more important when the victim has filed a charge: currently the victim has to organize a safe shelter while the perpetrator fears no consequences. A direct consequence beyond fines, such as detention for 10 days, should be established in form of a legal ground. Another improvement would be direct help by the police for the victim to get the personal belongings out of the apartment when the perpetrator is still there, which could avoid a possibly dangerous situation. As digital violence, for example post-separation stalking, is increasing, the IP suggests to implement an IT-specialist within the police who will act as a direct contact person and expert.

The IP senses a lot of frustration within the police when it comes to stalking as there is not enough legal agency. Following up on this, trainings for the police on the topics of stalking, communication with a traumatized and stressed victim and communication with a victim without native language skills are recommended.

When it comes to a better cooperation with the youth welfare office, the possibility of accompanied contact would be very important for the protection of the children and the

victim, up to the possibility to prohibit the contact of the perpetrator. Here, the IP stresses a clear position towards victim protection and perpetrator accountability by the case managers.

The recommendation of **the IP from the women's shelter includes** similar aspects, like the importance of more accountability towards violent fathers through mandatory measures by the youth welfare office. Another aspect refers to the lawsuit process: when a victim files a charge, the opposing lawyer should never get the information at which police station this was done.

Both IP's from the victim support emphasize the need of standardized conferences for high-risk cases between the police and victim support organizations, including working arrangements, clear procedure, information exchange. Currently this is done individually, depending on the case. The conference could include further institutions, depending on what the victim agrees to.

The IP from youth welfare office A criticizes the lack of perpetrator programmes nation-wide and recommends the participation in such programme to be mandatory within a probation. The IP pleads for more accountability of the perpetrator in general. This could be achieved through court decisions. The IP suggests to invite family court judges to multi-agency panels on DV regularly to discuss the situation of victims and their children.

The IP from youth welfare office B calls on a stronger cooperation and data exchange with the police, which is considered to be urgent. This includes more detailed information on the police operation and personal exchange. To carry out a better high-risk assessment, information on previous police operations in the family system should be mandatory in every documentation. Another appeal is a stronger cooperation with family courts: the IP mentions the need for more consequences for victims who stay with their violent partner, but also more legal actions against the perpetrator, for example no right of access to the children until the perpetrator has made a programme or therapy. Moreover, judges should get more training to understand DV dynamics better. The IP criticizes that the youth welfare offices do not have enough agency to influence the perpetrator.

The IP from the child guidance center appeals on closer cooperation between relevant institutions and better exchange of information in case of referral, especially in regard to potential cases of DV so that they can ask specific questions.

The IP from the perpetrator program recommends the development of a common understanding of endangerment between the diverse institutions, like the youth welfare office, the police, psychiatric support and perpetrator programmes. Moreover, the IP emphasizes on the need of a standardized procedure of the assessment. Another central aspect is the enhancement of perpetrator work.

Summary of WP2 work activities / Conclusion and recommendations

3.1 Victims:

While IP 1 (native speaker) criticizes “lack of empathy” of the police and lack of interest on her injuries, IP 2 (no German language skills) reports that the police took her situation serious and interpreted it correctly although she could not communicate with them. Thereby, the echo regarding a proper risk assessment (IP 1: no proper risk assessment, IP 2: correct risk assessment) and the overall feedback (IP 1 felt “lost”, IP 2 felt being taken seriously) on the operation distinguishes. Both IP mention the lack of information they received during the police operation, regardless the language skills, and plead for a procedure where victim of DV get brochures and contact data. Both report that the perpetrator didn’t receive any information / referral as well. Moreover, further help beyond the first aid on site is reported to be helpful: IP 2 emphasized how helpful it was to be removed from the place by bringing her to a women’s shelter, while IP 1 would have wished to be brought to shelter but the police didn’t suggest this. Although both had visible physical injuries, no documentation or medical referral was made.

Recommendations:

- **More information** handed out by the police, e.g. in form of contact numbers, flyers, information sheets etc. **in different languages**. They should include information of legal procedures and nearby support services, helplines etc. Additional to this, IP 2 suggests that public information on DV in several languages would help victims to get help.
- More “**empathy**” for the victim’s situation is considered to be important.
- **More support on site**, like calling an ambulance or a women’s shelter, is considered to be helpful.

3.2 Person in a perpetrator programme:

Despite some critical aspects, mostly the lack of information about support services, the IP was contentious with the police operation. He emphasized positively that he was taken seriously and got medical help.

Recommendations:

- **Receiving information of psychological support** services and perpetrator programme during the police information as well as the **medical treatment**.

3.3 Organisations who work with victims:

Within the different IP's who work as professionals with victims, we can notice a disparity of knowledge about DV high-risk cases from extended (victim support organizations) to very low (child guidance center).

Since the risk assessment is reported to be often different depending on the institution, it can be assumed that each institution has different criteria regarding the safety of the victim. While some IP's have a clear idea of high-risk indicators and use tools like "Danger Assessment" by Campbell, others seem to be poorly informed and have no criteria. The youth welfare office focuses on the risk assessment for children. Three IP report that the police often has a different risk assessment (less severely), especially when it comes to the situation of children and victims with poor German language skills. Standardized data exchange procedures (in form of faxes) with the police with regard to victims can only be identified in the victim consultation center; otherwise, there are standardized procedures between the police and the youth welfare office as soon as children are involved.

Although good cooperation with the police is reported occasionally, this often seems to depend on individuals, such as the police's local victim protection officer or other case workers. When it comes to data exchange, it is reported that the procedure worsened, even in institutions who have standardized procedures (victim consultation center + youth welfare office B). Moreover, the police documentation itself is criticized: sometimes it lacks important information, the extend of information may vary significantly depending on the case worker, sometimes the documentation (fax) arrives too late, sometimes it's not transferred at all.

The victim protection centers criticize that the mother (victim) is often perceived as the main responsible person for the child's welfare. This perception is confirmed by statements of both youth welfare offices and the child guidance center. Here, the need for basic training on the topic of DV becomes clear.

Recommendations:

- The overall consensus is the **need for more cooperation and exchange**, e.g. in form of high-risk conferences, clear procedures, clear responsibilities, cross-functional arrangements, optimization of the intervention steps that occur after the first aid. This includes the need for an **alignment of the assessments** made by the different institutions.
- Another consensus is the need for a **better data exchange**: standardized documentation and extended mandatory information are seen to be necessary to conduct a reliable risk assessment. This includes information on previous complaints, repeating violence, what happens after the operation (mandatory injunction, troublemaker speech...), and more information on the victim (e.g. previous stay in a women's shelter).
- There is a general consensus towards **more accountability of the perpetrator**, mainly in form of immediate legal actions by the police (e.g. detention for 10 days in case of violations of legal measures like the restraining order) or by the youth welfare office

(e.g. no right of access to the children until the perpetrator has made a programme or therapy).

- **Need for training of the police** is seen on the topics of stalking, communication with a traumatized and stressed victim and communication with a victim without native language skills.
- The implementation of an **IT-specialist** is recommended by one IP.
- Moreover, the need for **more perpetrator programmes** and mandatory participation is ascertained.

3.4 Organisation who work with perpetrators

As one of the key aspects, the IP mentions that the referral to the programme doesn't work well since the clients contact the programme by themselves in almost every case. While the cooperation with the victim protection officer works very well, the cooperation with the police in general is considered to be insufficient. Regarding the IP, this is linked to the fact that only very few cases are forwarded to the programme, there is almost no data exchange and no standardized risk assessment. In addition to this, the cooperation with institutions like the youth welfare office are named as "challenging".

Recommendations:

- Better **referral by official institutions** like the police and the youth welfare office towards a perpetrator programme
- Development of a **common understanding** of the dangerousness of the perpetrator and the endangerment of the victim between the relevant institutions (police, youth welfare office, psychiatric support, perpetrator programmes)
- Development of one **standardized risk assessment instrument** all institutions
- **Enhancement of perpetrator programmes** in order to have a effective victim support

Appendices

Appendix 1: National level statistics and reports

Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik 2022, Lagebild Häusliche Gewalt. See German file: <file:///C:/Users/odamsen/Work%20Folders/Downloads/HaeuslicheGewalt2022-1.pdf>

Appendix 2: Interview/Focus Group Guide used (see separate attachment "TACTICS_WP2_Country_Report_GESINE_Interview_Guide")