



Funded by the  
European Union

# TACTICS

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

Greece

The Union of Women Associations of Heraklion

## Contents

Overview of existing domestic violence response system for multi-agency collaboration .....	2
Indicators.....	2
Data .....	4
Overview of Advisory Groups performed .....	11
Summary of Victim Advisory Group .....	11
Summary of Perpetrator Advisory Group .....	12
Summary of Police Advisory Group.....	14
Summary of Other Professional Advisory Group – optional.....	16
Summary of WP2 work activities .....	17

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

### Indicators

- i. Proportion of domestic violence cases reported to the police that are investigated and prosecuted
- ii. Proportion of survivors of domestic violence who report improved satisfaction with quality and safety of police services
- iii. Proportion of survivors of domestic violence using police services

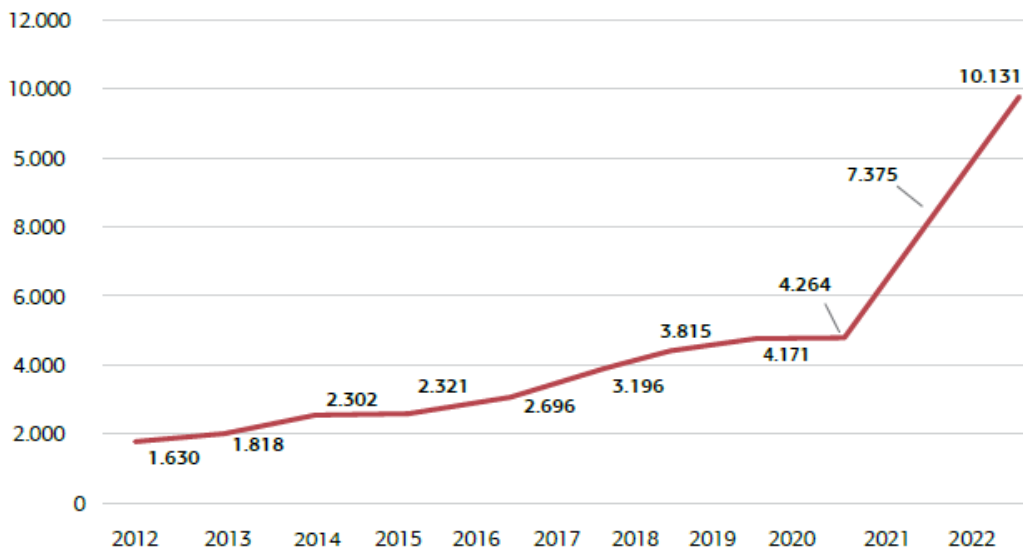
In Greece, there is an alarming increase in the percentage of violent incidents against women and girls. There is not in place a comprehensive, coherent information system for data collection and analysis on gender-based violence. Fragmented and non-coherent data combined with the absence of any institutionalized multiagency collaboration model protocols deprives the Greek state of having a clear idea of phenomenon's multi-sidedness.

Drawing on police administrative data, in the 3rd national report of General Secretariat Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality -GSDFPGE (2022) it is stated that in 2021, the numbers of reporting DV incidents to the police authorities have been raised up to 73% in comparison to 2020. According to the [Hellenic Police annual report on Domestic Violence \(2022\)](#), in 2020, out of the reported 5809 incidents of DV, in 1.566, the victims were men while 4.243 were women. In 2021, out of 9942 cases, in 2567 cases, the victims were men and 7.375 were women and proceeded to reporting an incident compared to 4.264 in 2020. In terms of age, in the age groups that concentrate the higher numbers are the age group of 35-45 (2120 women), 45-60 (1696 women) and 30-35 (888 women). Concerning nationality, 8158 victims (both women and men) were Greeks while 1778 victims (both women and men) were foreigners. In most cases, the victims appear to have been connected, at the time of the crime or in the past, with the perpetrator through a partner or a spousal relationship. The police data on the victim-offender relationship shows that 59.5 % of the relationships between the victim and the perpetrator were partner relationships. The highest percentage of perpetrators is victims' spouses (34.9%) while the 11.7% is victims' permanent partners, 6.5% ex-spouses and 6.3% ex-partners are the perpetrators of the crimes (GSDFPGE, 2022, p.108).

With regards to 2022 statistics on violence against women, according to the [Hellenic Police Report \(2022\)](#), 11.632 incidents of DV and IPV were reported to the Police. Out of those, 108 were felonies and 11524 misdemeanours. According to the report, all of the incidents were handled and prosecuted by the Police. As specified by the Secretary General for Equality and Human Rights-SGEHR (2023), the figure of filed complaints to the Police regarding DV/IPV

incidents was increased by 31, 4% compared to 2021 and was doubled compared to 2020 (103, 5%). Specifically, in 2020, 4264 women filed a complaint to the Police, while in 2022, 10131.

**Γράφημα 1: Ετήσιος αριθμός γυναικών θυμάτων ενδοοικογενειακής βίας (2010-2022, ΕΛΑΣ)**



SGEHR, 2023, p.119

Concerning 2023 data on violence against women, according to the [Hellenic Police Press Release](#) (3<sup>rd</sup> of August, 2023), 835 incidents were handled by the specialized units on DV within the Police Authorities, in the first 4 months of the year.

According to the 3rd national report of [GSDFPGE \(2022\)](#), and despite of the efforts made on improving the procedures for collecting and reporting DV and IPV data, Police Authorities' database is still under development. Data from the local Courts in Greece are still missing, and according to a research report for [Re-treat \(2021\)](#) project purposes, out of 25% of women, survivors of IPV and DV, only 14% called on Police for help, while 55% decided to handle the situation on their own or with a friend and family member.

In terms of multi-agency collaboration and referral framework, in the Greek context, the police authorities are not responsible for making referrals of victims and/or perpetrators to relevant stakeholders (e.g. Social Services, Victim Support and Perpetrator Work Services. According to [Hellenic Police annual report on Domestic Violence \(2022\)](#), police authorities' responsibilities is to provide victims with information concerning the law, their rights and the procedures that should follow as well as regarding services offering psychosocial support is provided to them. Concerning referral procedure, a case after being reported to the Police

Authorities is passed to the Prosecutors' Office and is lead to the Penal Mediation, if the case is a misdemeanor.

## Data

### Police use of risk assessment tools

The Article 51 of the Istanbul Convention establishes the obligation to ensure the all the authorities involved effectively evaluate and produce a plan to manage the safety risks that a survivor of DV & IPV faces according to standardized procedures. In compliance with the standards of Istanbul Convention, the GSDFPGE proceeded to the development of a horizontal DV risk-assessment tool embedded in the Act: «*Horizontal Interventions at National Level for Combating Violence Against Women*” of the Operational Program “Public Sector Reform 2014-2020». The development of the tool was based on recorded data from entities involved e.g. Counseling Centers of the Network of Structures of the GSDFPGE, the Department of Domestic Violence of the Hellenic Police, the Prosecutor's Office, the Forensic Medicine Service and Social Services of the Municipalities ([Government of Greece, 2022](#)). In drafting the tool, consultation meetings took place with relevant stakeholders and particular attention was paid on the inclusion of entities working with children, in order to include children's perspective. The tool was intended to be deployed by various actors e.g. counseling Centers, health professionals, police officers, judiciary and forensic officers. The pilot phase started in March 2022. There is not yet an established protocol applied.

On the other hand, according to [GREVIO \(2023\)](#), the police authorities seem to deploy a risk-assessment tool exclusively adapted to domestic violence cases. Therefore, in other cases of gender-based violence e.g. rape, risk assessments do not seem to be conducted or police officers evaluate the risks relied on their experience and intuitive skills, in the absence of well-structured and standardized tool. Furthermore, the absence of a multi-agency effort in conducting risk-assessment is stressed (p.62). Cases' outcomes are not always communicated to other entities involved. That entails risks for the victim's safety as crucial information can be missed. Moreover, despite the efforts made on utilizing a common standardized risk-assessment tool by various actors, [GREVIO \(2023\)](#) underlines the absence of standardized common procedures across all relevant entities and the co-cooperation with NGOs who also conduct risk assessment and develop safety plans for their beneficiaries. In Crete, since 2022, under the responsibility of the Heraklion Procecurator's Office, a multiagency team (cross scientific group) has been formalized in order to jointly discuss high risk cases. At this group discussion the following groups participated: the Police, UWAH, and the local school of social science, the local prosecutors and KETHEA, the unit for mitigating addictions in Crete. This group is coordinated by the Chief Public Prosecutor, and is focused only on perpetrators work and management under the lens of high risk analysis.

## Police use of case management flowcharts/maps/diagrams

There is no available data on this question.

Police number of referrals to victim services

Police number of referrals to perpetrator services

Police number of referrals to other services, e.g. social workers

According to [GREVIO \(2023\)](#), in Greece, the referral procedures are not formalized or institutionalized. Therefore, there is no access to data related to referrals to victim support, perpetrator and other social services. In Greece, the Police Authorities are not responsible for making referrals to other relevant entities involved. As specified by the Police Authorities, after filing the complaint and an informative leaflet is provided to the individuals involved in the incident. The 2023 legislation amendment, foresees a self-declared prosecution of the perpetrator to court or at penal mediation process, providing a priority for court order at the sooner possible time.

### Other relevant data:

Number of victims reporting being a victim of domestic violence to police services in your country or setting; if possible, data should be disaggregated by sex, age group, nationality, etc. to collect info on key special needs groups targeted

Number of police-recorded crime of a domestic violence case in 2022

As specified by the 4<sup>th</sup> annual report on violence against women (SGEHR, 2023), IPV & DV police data are gathered by the specialized police unit on the issue. Data are classified by victim's and perpetrator's gender and their relationship between them. In line with the 3<sup>rd</sup> national report of GSDFPGE (2022), and despite of the efforts made on improving the procedures for collecting and reporting gender-based violence data, Police Authorities' database is still under development. The indicators utilized by the Police Authorities are as follows:

- Annual Number of women victims of IPV/DV
- Annual Number of complaints to the Police concerning IPV/DV incidents
- Annual Number of men perpetrators of IPV/DV
- Annual Number of victims of physical IPV/DV
- Annual Number of victims of verbal and psychological IPV/DV
- Annual Number of victims of sexual violence
- Annual Number of victims of financial abuse

- Annual Number of victims that report a rape incident
- Annual Number of femicides

For the year 2022, 10.131 women experienced DV/IPV while 11.534 complaints were filed. Concerning gender, 75% (10.131) are women and 25% (3.435) are men while the highest percentage of perpetrators is victims' spouses at 31, 7% (461 cases). Nearly 13, 5% of the perpetrators (1.900 cases) were victims' partner, while ex-partners and ex-spouses gather lower numbers, at 7, 3% (1.032 cases) and 6, 8% (964 cases) respectively.

Concerning other victims' categories, perpetrators' children (14, 3%), parents (9, 8%) and siblings (7, 2%) are included.

In classifying these data, there is no disaggregation by age and nationality.

### Peak times for calls to police relating to domestic violence

That data is not available.

Number of specialty trained police officers in conducting investigation of domestic violence cases in your country or setting

Number of police staff receiving training and professional development on responding to domestic violence cases based on case examples including victim and perpetrator feedback and information on:

- a) Responding effectively to breaches of orders and bail;
- b) Coercive and controlling behaviour, such as perpetrator tactics for keeping victims in relationships and perpetrator manipulation of police responders;
- c) Taking allegations of domestic violence seriously;
- d) Understanding how the evidence gathered by police in domestic violence cases is used in court;
- e) Victim and perpetrator questioning techniques;
- f) Information on support organisations for victims and for perpetrators
- g) Understanding for why victims frequently minimise or downplay the extent of the abuse when police arrive on site due to coercive

control by the perpetrator on the victim and perpetrators present themselves as wronged

According to GREVIO (2023) the Police Academy's curriculum has been amended to include thematic courses on VAWG, DV and IPV, as well as courses on the applicable laws on DV and the appropriate handling of DV cases and sexual crimes, the management of complaints, efficient risk assessments and sociology and psychology courses dealing with issues related to gender, sexuality and inequalities. Combined with this, in-service training has expanded in the last few years (p.7). Moreover, the police units specialized in dealing with DV cases receive additional in-service training including the Council of Europe's HELP course on violence against women and domestic violence. This course has been completed by more than 1.000 police officers. At this point, it is important to note that in 2019, 18 operational offices specializing in dealing with DV cases (p.58). As specified by the Police Authorities, 665 police officers serving in the specialized police unit were trained in 2020 compared to 120 in 2019. The number was of 619 in 2021 and 416 in 2022 (p.27). Additionally, in 2022, 13.352 police officers outside the specialized DV unit received training on handling DV cases (p.27).

Number of bail conditions for perpetrators of domestic violence in order to protect victims

That data is not available.

Number of victims that withdraw their case from police

The GREVIO baseline report (2023) refers to the high attrition rates that arise from an analysis of the limited available data on reporting and conviction rates in cases of GBV. In 2019, police reported 4.1.71 victims of offences under the Domestic Violence Law and 4.264 in 2020. According to GREVIO (2023) most of these cases were prosecuted. However, in 2019 the figures of convictions amounted to 1320 and in 2020, to 656. Similarly, the figures for rape also show disparities between police reports and convictions. While 202 women reported rape in 2020, based on available data, only eight convictions were issued. Concerning data, in 2021, the Greek police indicate that the number of complaints on DV filed by women was increased by 73% (7.375) compared to 4.264 cases in 2020. In 2022, the figure of complaints exceeded 11.000 cases. The number of withdrawn complaints is not available.



According to GREVIO (2023), NGOs and lawyers working with survivors of DV/IPV underline the inefficient and disinterested police handling in DV cases. Specifically, there are reports indicating that sometimes police officers may discourage victims to file a complaint while sometimes fail to arrest and detain perpetrators when it is necessary. In conjunction with this, GREVIO (2023) stresses the differences in case handling between the specialized DV police unit compared to the rest of police stations. Combined with this, a discouraging factor contributing to case’s withdrawal by a DV/IPV victim is the conditions in case of in flagrante delicto. Specifically, the victim is informed by the police that if the perpetrator presses also charges, she may also be arrested until the next day. On the other hand, police representatives being aware of the problematic aspects of this issue, state that they request prosecutor’s permission not to arrest women, survivors of DV/IPV. However, this procedure remains and is dependent on the officer’s experience and assessment. Furthermore, undocumented female migrants and asylum seekers, who have not entered the asylum procedure, refrain from reporting DV/IPV as they are afraid of being arrested, even though the legislation in force prohibits the arrest of women reporting GBV, while being in an “irregular condition”. This combined with the inadequacy in interpretation services at a number of police stations highly discourages women on the move to file a complaint.

Number of domestic violence protection orders granted (if applicable in your country/setting)

No available data.

Number of referrals to other resources such as health, social and legal services

No available data.

Number of multi-agency risk assessment conferences held in 2022 for police and partner organisations to discuss high-risk domestic violence cases

According to the Hellenic Ministry of Citizen Protection (2022), police officers occupied in the specialized police unit on DV/IPV attend meetings with relevant stakeholders coming from the public, private and third sector. As specified by the [annual police report on DV \(2023\)](#), 34 conferences carried out aiming at reinforcing multi-agency collaboration among the stakeholders involved in tackling DV/IPV. Those conferences were focused on a range of trainings and actions e.g. gender roles and stereotypes, risk-assessment tools, multi-agency collaboration on perpetrator work, forensic interviewing, child protection, avoidance of secondary victimization, and the necessary approaches to be followed in cases of women experiencing DV/IPV while being on the move.

Through this, the aim is to increase stakeholders' knowledge of each other's responsibilities and role. That will facilitate detecting the needs coming from the fields and by extension tackling and solving issues related to their daily practice and response to IPV/DV incidents. Combined with this, in the Hellenic Ministry of Citizen Protection (2022), it is stated that the Greek Police cooperates with the British Embassy (e.g. training sessions with British police officers and exchange of good practices). Combined with this, the Greek Police actively engages in collaboration with the General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality (GSDFPGE) in order to implement the provisions of Istanbul Convention. In Crete, since 2022, under the responsibility of the Heraklion Prosecutor's Office, a multiagency team (cross scientific group) has been created in order to jointly discuss high risk cases. At this group participate, the Police, UWAH, and the local school of social sciences, the local prosecutors and KETHEA, the unit for mitigating addictions in Crete. This group is coordinated by the Chief Public Prosecutor, and is focused only on perpetrators work and management under the lens of high risk analysis.

Use of question prompts or checklists to help police handling of domestic violence calls to police, for example make sure police staff allocate the case to specialist teams when involving vulnerable people

The Greek Police Authorities have taken significant steps to reinforce the existing legislative and institutional framework related to handling DV/IPV cases. The specific guidelines related to dealing with DV/IPV cases were updated in 2022. Specifically, in these new guidelines, checklists for police intervention and other good practices such as providing victims with the registration number of their complaint and the identification and contact number of the police officer in charge of the case (GREVIO, 2023, p.58). Moreover, based on Police protocols, a follow-up procedure is included as contacting the victim at least twice after having filed the complaint is foreseen (GREVIO, 2023, p.58). However, these police protocols do not involve other relevant stakeholders and entities involved in the victim support and perpetrator work e.g. NGOs, shelters, counseling, health and social services. Therefore, there appear to be no mechanisms to reinforce multi-agency collaboration in handling DV/IPV cases

Use of risk assessment tools or guidelines, if yes pls provide a copy of the tool or guideline

According to the [GSEHR \(2023\)](#), the common risk -assessment tool developed in 2021 includes a set of specific and targeted questions aiming at encouraging victims of DV/IPV to recall and describe their experience of DV/IPV. This facilitates professionals' assessment regarding the level and intensity in each incident. As specified by the [GSEHR \(2023\)](#), through

the common risk-assessment tool aims at encouraging professionals to have a common understanding on violence, factors and following a victim-centered approach. According to the [GSEHR \(2023\)](#), in December 2021, in each relevant entity, persons of reference were appointed. Those individuals were involved in focus group in order to develop and reflect on the tool. Afterward training sessions were carried out and completed in June 2022. Concerning the methodology followed, it included desk-research, research on stakeholders' available data, Police and GSEHR statistics. The piloting phase of the common risk-assessment tool started on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2022 and completed on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November. During the piloting phase, the need for meetings arose to provide support and supervision on how to implement the tool, by the professionals who were called upon to implement it. This resulted in the establishment of the ARTEMIS teams along the lines of the MARAC domestic violence risk management teams in the UK. The teams were convened once a month by the contractor in each pilot area of the tool. In February 2023 the evaluation phase of the tool pilot was completed.

On the other hand, GREVIO (2023) refers to the absence of a structured and standardized common risk-assessment for VAWG cases apart from DV, stating that police officers evaluate a case based on their experience and intuitive skills. As specified by the Police Authorities, the Prosecutor's office and the Court may conduct an individual evaluation of risks. GREVIO (2023) underlines that where risk-assessments are conducted, they are not a part of a multi-agency effort and the necessary outcomes are not communicated among the relevant agencies. That can contribute to misinterpreting and/or missing crucial information for victim's safety. GREVIO (2023) stresses that there is no co-operation with Women Support Services and Perpetrator Work programs, who also prepare safety plans for victims.

Number of repeat callers to police as victims of domestic violence

No available data.

Supervision provided to police officers handling domestic abuse calls, e.g., supervisors reviewing call logs to make sure all relevant information had been recorded, listening to calls as they happened, and giving call handlers individual feedback

Direct internal supervision on calls bases is performed at internal level through a formal coordination process but is strict related to internal procedural issues. Multiagency coordination is performed at the "Interdisciplinary Scientific local committee group" coordinated by the Heraklion Prosecutors' Office at the context of a local Multiparty Memorandum of collaboration.

Average time for police to respond on site to a case of domestic violence  
Not a specific analysis has been carried out.

## Overview of Advisory Groups performed

In Greece, UWAH conducted 4 in-person focus groups in Crete, Greece for TACTICS project's purposes. Specifically, UWAH carried out:

- A focus group with professionals working at Public Social Services providing victim support and perpetrator work. This focus group was conducted on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 and was consisted of 4 social scientists (psychologists and social workers), all of them women. Concerning duration, it lasted roughly 2 hours.
- A focus group with perpetrators of IPV & DV which was conducted on the 31<sup>th</sup> of October 2023. This focus group was consisted of 7 individuals, all men and perpetrators of IPV & DV. Regarding duration, it lasted roughly 2, 5 hours.
- A focus group with survivors of IPV & DV, which was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2023. It was consisted of 7 individuals, all women who have experienced IPV & DV. Concerning duration, it lasted roughly 2, 5 hours.
- A focus group with 7 police officers working at the Rethimnon Police Directorate was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2023. The group was consisted 3 women and 4 men. Concerning duration, it lasted roughly 2,5 hours.

## Summary of Victim Advisory Group

- What works well**
- What are challenges**
- Recommendations for improvement**

On 1/11/2023 a focus group with victims of domestic and intimate partner violence was held at the offices of the Union of Women Association of Heraklion Prefecture (UWAH).

Participants were UWAH's beneficiaries and were invited via a phone-call to participate in this focus group. The discussion started with the question: *"Why don't women speak up?"*.

The majority of participants argued that quite often their social environment e.g. family,

relative and friends do not react properly when they listened to experiences of IPV and DV. Their inappropriate reaction can be discouraging for women to express their feelings and speak up about the incident. In conjunction with this, the absence of a protective framework for a woman who reports an incident of IPV and DV was noted by the participants: *"I was thinking that If I report the incident his behavior will get worse "*, *"financial is a factor in staying"*, *"I am afraid for my parents, my friends..."*.

Speaking about the mechanism of support and the role of police, participants referred to their interaction with the Authorities as a “matter of luck” depending on the person that they would interact with. Specifically, some of them referred to their maltreatment and to the fact that some police officers were suspicious of their testimonies and allegations. Combined with this, a participant referred to the tardiness of the police patrol car to arrive after her call on the emergency number (100). For her, this was a deterring factor of being addressed to the Police and calling again the emergency number after another outburst of her husband against her. In opposition to this, others referred to the encouraging and supportive stance of the Police Authorities during filing the complaint against their ex-partner or husband. Nevertheless, afterwards they did not receive any information about the next steps that they should follow, or about their rights in this procedure. That became a reason for feeling insecure, confused if they did the right thing and followed the procedure properly.

Concerning what should be improved, the participants referred to the inadequate and problematic risk-assessments tools (a questionnaire) that the Greek Police deploys after a victim of IPV & DV files a complaint against her ex-partner and/or husband. In their view, some of the included questions are irrational and not-adapted to an IPV & DV incident’s purposes. Some of them noted that the police officers are not trained to handle incidents as such despite the establishment of Domestic Violence Units within the Police. All of them stressed that the lack of expertise on DV & IPV plays a crucial role in their secondary victimization and would be avoided if the police officers were specialized. All in all, participants argued about the “inefficient system” a “non user friendly one” the complexities they had to deal with, within a society which does not encourage women to report and stand up till the end.

## Summary of Perpetrator Advisory Group

- d. What works well**
- e. What are challenges**
- f. Recommendations for improvement**

On 30/10/2023, a focus group discussion was held with 7 men, perpetrators of DV and IPV, at the offices of the Union of Women's Associations of Heraklion Prefecture (UWAH). Participants are UWAH beneficiaries and were contacted via a phone-call to participate in this focus group conducted within TACTICS project. All of the participants have entered the so-called Penal Mediation Procedure, a restorative justice procedure which was based on the European Directive on mediation in criminal proceedings. The implementation of Penal Mediation presupposes that the perpetrator pledge not to commit any further crime of DV and to participate in a special counseling program, as well as to undertake financial compensation to the victim (ARTEMIS,2021).

The conversation started with their perceptions and their knowledge of the term “domestic violence”. A mentions: *“I thought domestic violence is related to the couple, not to ex-partners, I have divorced...”*. C notes: *“There is no domestic violence, I don't accept the term, if that's the reason that we are here, it is time for me to leave.”*

Concerning their experience concerning Penal Mediation and their interaction with the relevant stakeholders (Police, Public Prosecution and Social Services), some of the participants referred to their false guilt and the "biased judiciary" that decides without having the necessary evidence in their possession. It was also noted that Penal Mediation was the way to avoid imprisonment as due to the bias of the judicial authority "no one is acquitted in the end". Regarding their interaction with the Police, all of them referred to the relatively good treatment and support that they received. Only one of them expressed his dissatisfaction with the Police approach, as he had to spend two days in the flagrante process. Concerning access and provision of information, one of the participants mentioned that he and his son were informed by the Police about the Penal Mediation Procedure, while others referred to the inefficient provision of information and guidance on how proceed to the next steps of the procedure. Concerning other challenges, most of them referred to the inadequate evidence that prove their guilt. Therefore, they seem to claim that judges follow an approach in favor of women and are biased on how they take a decision in the Court.

With regards to what should change, the majority of them referred to the necessity to follow a holistic approach for both sides. In their view, victims and perpetrators should be examined and addressed to relevant services. From their perspective, the current approach of referring perpetrators to the Penal Mediation Procedure is one-sided and ignores the complexity of issues such as, while it privileges women victims. Under this process, the perception of perpetrators was very much affected by the case that they were under the “penal mediation”, so their best benefit (legal) was to “deny” the accountability of action. At this focuses groups, it was revealed the stereotype of the “misogyny of the system”; that is, that much of their conviction is based to the female prosecutor and the female judge. This perception was much fueled also by the respective lawyer, and in overall affected their perception about the phenomenon in total.

## Summary of Police Advisory Group

- g. What works well**
- h. What are challenges**
- i. Risk Assessment/Case management tools used**
- j. Data sharing challenges**
- k. Recommendations for improvement**

At the meeting held on 14/11/2023, at the office of the Rethimno Police Directorate, the role of the Police in the interventions for tackling DV and IPV was discussed.

Specifically, the conversation started with questions regarding their role on the case management and the level of multi-agency collaboration on tackling DV and IPV. All participants referred to the purely investigative role that Police has in the management of a DV and IPV incident. At that point, it was also clarified that the role of the Police is not to judge but to collect the necessary data to facilitate the work of the Prosecutor's Office. Specifically, they undertake the tasks of taking the statements and collecting the necessary data for the case. Regarding the testimony process, they noted that it is conducted by 2 police officers to avoid the possibility of misinterpretation and error. In conjunction with this, references were made to how sometimes statements do not reflect the case holistically. In particular, a police officer referred to the taking of a testimony from an IPV/DV victim who was later found to have been confronted with attempted murder. This was not stated in the initial statement.

Prompted by this example, references were made to the absence of standardized risk-assessment tool. Therefore, police officers assess informally and empirically the level of risk of an incident. Regarding the effectiveness in case management, police officers referred to the importance of professional experience, personality, the ability to put yourself in other people's shoes, the ability to take a statement and write. However, they underlined that there are no guidelines/manuals on how to take testimonies and how to handle a perpetrator and a survivor of DV/IPV. Combined with this, participants referred to the insufficient training that they obtain. It was noted: *"We do not receive any specialized training but we are getting trained through our working experience"*. Combined with this, police officers referred to the absence of a standardized framework of their responsibilities despite efforts made. Regarding this, participants referred to the setting up the offices of specialized police unit on the domestic violence. Despite the establishment of this specialized unit, officers appointed in the unit of domestic violence do not have duties only there. That hinders their daily practice and provokes vital issues in the efficient functionality of the domestic violence unit. Regarding perpetrator work, the absence of perpetrator program structures in the region of Rethimnon was mentioned. Moreover, regarding cases' follow-up, it was mentioned that there is no procedure as such.

Acknowledging additional challenges, the need to tackle shelters' scarcity issue is of vital importance. According to their accounts, it is essential to have the capacity to guarantee the immediate access of women, survivors of IPV/DV to temporary accommodation. Combined to this, the suitability of the spaces where testimonies are taken was discussed. It was noted that the premises are not designed in a way to make the victim feel safe and comfortable, e.g. During her stay she may be in the same space with people who have committed a variety of offences. In conjunction with this, some of the participants stated that many of the women coming to the Police Offices are in doubt whether they have done the right thing or not.

Concerning the level of multi-agency collaboration among the relevant stakeholders, the majority referred to the inconsistencies and difficulties in achieving a well-coordinated response. In particular, references were made to the role of social services and their inefficient cooperation with the Police. For example, a police officer referred to incidents taking place during the weekends, specifically, he mentioned: *"There are DV and IPV incidents occurring in the weekend and the Police handles them but the Social Services are closed, so, how can we make referrals for those people to Social Services?"* In conjunction with this, it was mentioned that the lack of co-management can contribute to secondary victimization.

Combined with the aforementioned, the majority mentioned the need to have persons of reference in each service to whom a professional can refer incidents. From their perspective, that would facilitate their daily practice and by extension the quality of services. Furthermore, the role of the school was stressed as well as the necessity to provide teachers with training seminars on DV, IPV, the importance of consent etc., as sometimes in cases of child abuse they are the first to be aware of but due to lack of knowledge and fear they do not report the incident.

With regards to the positive developments, officers referred to the national Domestic Violence application through which statistics regarding victim and perpetrator profiles, forms of violence, relationship between victim and perpetrator are classified and are available to the Police.

To conclude, it was mentioned that despite the obvious upgrade in police practices throughout the years and by extension in the level of service delivery, there is still space for improvement. Specifically, one participant noted: *"In the past as a young police officer, with a colleague, we took a testimony from a 3 year old child... I do not know how we did this"*.



## Summary of Other Professional Advisory Group – optional

- l. What works well**
- m. What are challenges**
- n. Risk Assessment/Case management tools used**
- o. Data sharing challenges**
- p. Recommendations for improvement**

At the meeting held on 9/10/2023, at the offices of the Union of Women Association of Heraklion Prefecture (UWAH), the role of social services in interventions regarding the management of DV and IPV was discussed. Specifically, the discussion started with how interventions are conducted and how support to victims of DV & IPV is provided. In a first stage, Social Services are made aware of the incident through a telephone contact, e.g. from a victim of domestic and intimate partner violence or people in the wider social and family environment. Otherwise, they are informed by the Public Prosecutor's Office through a prosecutor's order.

Regarding the difficulties they face in mapping and monitoring incidents, they reported that the persons involved often change residence. An additional barrier to their interaction with individuals involved in the incident is the latter's feeling of fear and suspicion that the services will contribute to the loss of parental responsibility. The participants referred to interviews taking place with the persons involved and to the difficulty, refusal of women to speak about their and their children's abuse. In conjunction with this, it was argued that, often, non-verbal communication motivates professionals to repeat their visits to the family in order to confirm or not confirm their suspicions about IPV & DV.

Social Services professionals referred to the lack of training and the absence of guidelines and risk-assessment tools regarding DV & IPV (both for Victim Support & Perpetrator Work). Concerning, their interaction with the Police, professionals argued that there is a weakness in cooperation and very low / even none co-management of incidents. In particular, they referred to the unilateral collaboration between the Police and the Prosecution and by extension to the feeling of "exclusion" experienced. For example, participants mentioned that the Police do not inform and provide them with necessary information that could facilitate their daily practice and efficient management of a case. Moreover, they implied that mutual understanding and effective cooperation is a "matter of luck" that depends on the individual and not on the entity. In conjunction with the above, professionals referred to the multiple responsibilities they have within the context of the operation of the Municipality's Social Services and the burnout they experience due to insufficient support, lack of a clear framework concerning action and understaffing. All of the above contribute to an ineffective and uncoordinated response to the needs of women victims of DV & IPV. In particular, a participant mentioned that it is common to have multiple fragmented reports of

diverse services involved in an incident in a non-coordinated manner. This dysfunctional approach causes confusion and tensions among the professionals and entities, while it definitely contributes to the secondary victimization of the family/victims. In many cases, the victim (child) is examined more than 3 times, while the case takes very long time to go to court. We have report of a case which took 5 years to go to court while the victim had to talk about the case for more than 5 times.

Concerning improvement, during the discussion, the issue of how a well-coordinated and holistic approach can be achieved, was discussed. At this point, the role of the Prosecutor was stressed and the urgent need to staff the Social Services Unit of the Public Prosecution with social scientists.

## Summary of WP2 work activities

From **July to September 2023**, UWAH staff started to gather material (literature, national and local statistics etc.) related to the framework under which Police Authorities operate concerning dealing with DV/IPV cases. In this period, UWAH organized a “kick-off” meeting, in which local stakeholders became aware of TACTICS project and were requested to participate in TACTICS Advisory Panels. In **September 2023**, UWAH participated in a partners’ training regarding conducting interviews and focus groups with stakeholders involved in tackling DV/IPV as well as survivors and perpetrators. Afterward, UWAH adapted the interview guide and question to the local context.

From **October to November 2023**, UWAH carried out focus group with local stakeholders. UWAH conducted 4 focus groups. On 9/10/23, UWAH organized a focus group with professionals occupied at Social Service. In this focus group 4 social scientists were involved. On 30/11/23, UWAH carried out a focus group with perpetrators of DV/IPV, in which 7 male perpetrators participated in. On 1/11/23, the third focus group took place and 7 women, survivors of DV/IPV participated in. On 14/11/23, the last focus group was conducted. In this focus group, 7 police officers were involved. In conjunction with the aforementioned, UWAH proceeded to a bilateral meeting with the Police Directorate of Heraklion in order to guarantee for their involvement in the project’s upcoming activities.

From **December 2023 to January 2024**, UWAH staff was writing the TACTIC report.