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A strategic action to support the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Romania

New intervention centres for victims of sexual violence, establishing counselling services for perpetrators and sharing good practices with support from partners in Norway are some of the actions aimed at combatting gender-based violence in this EEA and Norway Grants project.



More than 3,850 professionals have participated in training sessions and information seminars about this approach to domestic and gender-based violence cases. (Illustration photo: iStockphoto)

About the project

The project is a strategic action that is intended to help the Romanian authorities to take a coordinated approach to addressing the challenges posed by the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. Moreover, the project is intended to facilitate the sharing of experience of best practices with the support of relevant Norwegian partners. Through its six main objectives (see more in fact box), this project covers all the four main pillars of the Istanbul Convention, which requires states to ensure: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Integrated Policies.

Training for professionals and support for victims and perpetrators

Support for professionals dealing with domestic and gender-based violence (GBV), establishment of counselling services for perpetrators and counselling for the victims of sexual violence are three of the main objectives in this project.

Support for professionals dealing with GBV

More than 3,850 professionals working in government, social assistance, law enforcement, social and health care have participated in training sessions and information seminars about this approach to domestic and gender-based violence cases.

Support for victims of sexual violence

The project contributes to reducing gender-based violence by enabling a new type of intervention for victims of sexual violence in ten new centres created at emergency hospitals around the country. There, victims of sexual violence can be given counselling, and medical and social interventions, including forensic examinations and help with filing a complaint with a police officer.

Establishment of counselling services for perpetrators

Eight new counselling centres for perpetrators will also be established, where training sessions will be held for relevant professionals, thereby strengthening their capacity to intervene and use effective new procedures and standardised tools.

Sharing best practices with support from relevant partners

Who have been your collaborators in the project, and in what way is this collaboration across sectors and countries important?

The project is intended to facilitate the sharing of experience of best practices with support from relevant project partners from Norway: the Secretariat of the Shelter Movement and the Centre for Research and Education in Forensic Psychiatry - St. Olavs University Hospital, Brøset Department.

The Secretariat of the Shelter Movement is an organisation with relevant experience of preventing and combating gender-based violence, and providing shelter and services for victims of domestic violence. The representatives from the Secretariat of the Shelter Movement held two seminars in Bucharest that focused on sharing the Norwegian experience and examples of good practice in providing social services for victims. A study visit to Norway will also be organised for 20 social workers from public and private providers of social services. It will focus on exchanging good practice in providing the best services for victims of domestic violence.



The representatives from the Secretariat of the Shelter Movement held two seminars in Bucharest that focused on sharing the Norwegian experience and examples of good practice in providing social services for victims.

Specialists from St. Olav's University Hospital, Brøset Department have also produced a manual for professionals working with perpetrators at the eight new counselling services. A two-day training course was held online and a follow-up session was held in Bucharest.

The two Norwegian partners add value to the project and contribute to strengthening bilateral relations between Norway and Romania.

Lessons learned: pitfalls and success criteria

Law enforcement authorities' low response when faced with complex gender-based violence cases

The main challenge is the low response of the law enforcement authorities when faced with complex gender-based violence cases. Although multidisciplinary training was provided for professionals, there is still a need to further address this issue through amendments to criminal law and by extending the multidisciplinary approach by involving other categories of professionals (social workers, forensic doctors and NGOs).

Insufficient public information leads to reluctance among victims

Moreover, insufficient public information about social services provided for the victims of GBV leads to reluctance on the part of victims to report cases and ask for the authorities' support.

Improving the collaboration between different entities through events

The many information and training events held during implementation of the project have helped to improve collaboration between local authorities and professionals working in different intervention fields (social workers, the police force, local government etc.). Creating new services (eight counselling centres for perpetrators and ten referral centres for sexual violence victims) also facilitates collaboration between professionals, which improves interventions in GBV cases and helps to increase confidence in the authorities and the services provided to reduce and combat violence against women.

In what way, do you think, is the Synergy Network an important tool for combating domestic and gender-based violence?

The Synergy Network facilitates the exchange of good practice between states as regards implementation of the Istanbul Convention and strategic action to prevent and combat gender-based violence.

The exchange of expertise in gender-based violence helps to reduce the gaps between states and contributes to sustainable and effective implementation of programmes. It also strengthens relations between states in the common fight to combat violence against women and girls.

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