https://www.eeagender.org/good-practices/How-prosecute-perpetrators/preventing-and-combating-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence/

Training activities to enhance the competence among the judiciary

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of Bulgarian magistrates and other professionals in the justice sector in order to more effectively implement the established standards for protection and institutional practices for prevention of and counteraction to domestic and gender-based violence (DGBV).



(Illustration: iStockphoto)

About the project

The training programme and other activities envisaged under the project aim to enhance the competence of the judiciary and other relevant authorities to ensure effective prevention of and counteraction to DGBV. This is to implement a victim-centred approach and to improve the institutional cooperation in preventing and combating the said forms of violence. In this sense, the project encompasses the whole spectrum of the state’s responsibility to counteract DGBV.

The project activities are consistent with the Justice Programme's objective for strengthening the rule of law and contribute to the achievement of the programme's outcome for ensuring improved capacity of Bulgarian authorities in the DGBV area.

Training, DGBV-materials and evaluations

The primary mechanism envisaged under the project is the development and delivery of training to ensure implementation of the international standards for the prevention of and protection against domestic violence.

In order to increase the effectiveness of training, it will be offered in various complementary formats and the content of the various training events will be tailored to the specific needs of professionals in the judiciary, administration and law enforcement that deals with cases involving DGBV.

Furthermore, the project envisages the adaptation and pilot delivery of an e-learning module of the CoE HELP Programme on "Violence against Women and Domestic Violence". This programme provides a systematic overview of the international and European legal framework and the judgements and decisions delivered by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in this field.

A guide on DGBV issues for magistrates

Alongside the different training activities under the project, a case management guide on DGBV issues incorporating the relevant European standards will be developed. This guide is intended to support the day-to-day work of Bulgarian magistrates. The handbook will be based on a translation and adaptation of the training resources developed by the Council of Europe, and will provide guidance on efficient handling of cases involving DGBV, thus ensuring uniformity and consistency of the case law. Moreover, the handbook will outline problems and challenges related to investigation and resolution of domestic violence cases.

The training programmes, the training materials and the case management guide constitute capacity building instruments aimed at the establishment of a common understanding, uniform practice on DGBV cases and improved cooperation between the relevant authorities to provide a more effective institutional response to domestic and gender-based violence at the national level.

The project also aims to organise a study visit for the team of national experts involved in the development of the case management guide on DGBV issues to visit specialised bodies and structures of the Council of Europe that have competence on the adoption and implementation of the international standards for prevention and counteraction to domestic and gender-based violence. The study visit aims to raise awareness of the procedures and specific tools of the CoE specialised structures for counteraction to the specified forms of violence. This will enable the national experts to identify and borrow established best practices as a key prerequisite for the uniform understanding and efficient implementation at the national level of the international standards for prevention and protection in this field.

Evaluation of the pilot cooperation

A separate activity under the project focuses on the assessment of the pilot cooperation mechanism that aims to support victims of gender-based and domestic violence. This is established at the regional level by the National Legal Aid Bureau under the pre-defined project No 9. It will be carried out by a working group composed of experts from the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Healthcare and/or other institutions or organisations with competences in this field.

The Ministry of Justice is partner in the activity, and responsible for its implementation. This is a leading institution with statutory competence on the field. The assessment of the pilot local cooperation mechanism should contribute to ensure effective implementation of the international requirements and standards for protection of fundamental rights in the area of violence against women and domestic violence. Moreover, the assessment of the pilot mechanism should contribute to the development of a sustainable mechanism that will coordinate, implement and evaluate the measures and policies for prevention and combating violence against women undertaken by the Bulgarian State to fulfil its obligations in this area.

A common engagement in the fight against Violence

Several institutions and non-governmental organisations engaged in the fight against domestic and gender-based violence at the national level will support the implementation of the project. The Ministry of Justice, as a leading institution, occupies a key position among them, and will implement the evaluation of the local cooperation mechanism, launched under the project of the National Legal Aid Bureau (NLAB). The collaboration with other state bodies and non-governmental organisations is of vital importance for strengthening the inter-institutional cooperation and establishment of uniform practices for application of laws ensuring a more effective institutional response to domestic and gender-based violence at the national level.

The Council of Europe has also made an important contribution to the implementation of the project by developing training resources and providing expert support. The Council of Europe thus promotes better understanding and more efficient implementation of the international standards for counteraction of domestic and gender-based violence among national magistrates, legal professionals and experts from the relevant institutions working in this field.

The SYNERGY Network also has a favourable influence on the realisation of the project. The network provides the opportunity for synergetic interaction with other projects and programmes at both national and supranational levels, such as the Financial Mechanism of the EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021.

Synergies between programmes and projects

The SYNERGY Network established within the current programming period is an important and necessary link between the programmes of the Financial Mechanism of the EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, aimed at preventing and combating domestic and gender-based violence. It provides for synergies between programmes and projects carried out in this area at national and supranational level and contributes to improving their effectiveness through:

- Raising mutual awareness of the current state of legislation and law enforcement practices in the field of prevention and countering domestic and gender-based violence in the beneficiary countries. The aim is to overcome the existing negative attitudes in society and promote better understanding and more effective implementation of the international legal standards for protection in this area at the national level;
- Strengthening the mutual trust and cooperation between the donors and the beneficiaries under the programmes of the Financial mechanism of the EEA and the NFM 2014-2021 in the area concerned;
- Ensuring sustainability of the results achieved.

Reported by: Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Bulgaria (MoJ), Program operator

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