Project Effective Criminal Justice Strategies and Practices to Combat Gender-based Violence in Eastern Europe

Closing Conference

5-6 March 2020, Ratsaal, Hofburg, Vienna

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and rationale

Gender-based violence is one of the most serious and pervasive human rights violations that not only affects the personal safety and security of victims, but also prevents their full individual and societal development. Due to shortcomings in the criminal justice system to respond to these forms of violence, such as shortcomings in police response, ineffective restraining orders, legal and policy gaps, many victims of gender-based violence are at risk of further abuse. Negative public perception of the quality of criminal justice system’s response also leads to a lack of trust in the criminal justice system and consequently to underreporting of cases of gender-based violence.

The OSCE Strategic Framework for Police-Related Activities (PC.DEC/1049) defines the promotion of protection of victims of crime, particularly of violent crime and vulnerable victims, as a priority area of the OSCE’s police-related activities. The two OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women (MC.DEC/15/05 and MC.DEC/07/14) recommend participating States to enhance measures to prevent violence, protect and assist victims and improve data collection. The 2004 Gender Action Plan tasks the OSCE Secretariat, OSCE Institutions and its Field Operations to assist participating States in developing programmes and activities aimed at the prevention of all forms of GBV.

The Transnational Threats Department/Strategic Police Matters Unit (TNTD/SPMU), in partnership with the Institute for Police Education at Linnaeus University (the Institute) and in co-ordination with the OSCE Gender Section and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has developed this project, in its efforts to address common challenges in fighting gender-based violence.

This event is funded by the European Union’s Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). The content of this document represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.
With the financial support of the European Commission through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) and the governments of Germany and Austria, the project was implemented between 2018 and 2020 in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.

The objective of the project was to enhance the responsiveness, professional knowledge, skills and technical capacities of criminal justice practitioners, in particular first responder police officers, investigators and prosecutors in addressing gender-based violence, thus contributing to an increased public trust in the criminal justice system response and subsequently an expected higher level of reported cases.

In order to achieve this objective, the project focused on the promotion of information exchange and sharing of best practices of investigations, identifications and prosecutions of cases, and enhancing effective co-operation between all relevant agencies involved. This was achieved through the set-up of national Steering Committees, Working Groups and Reference Groups, the development and delivery of a regional Training of Trainers, followed by national specialized trainings for criminal justice practitioners; and a regional awareness-raising campaign, targeting both criminal justice system actors and potential victims of gender-based violence.

Objective

The main objective of the conference is to bring together key stakeholders active in the project implementation from the three beneficiary countries: Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. Government officials (from law enforcement agencies, judicial authorities and victim protection services), civil society representatives and researchers will discuss the achievements, assess the outcomes and draw lessons from the project implementation. Further on, they will identify ways forward to combat gender-based violence in the region.

Expected outcomes

- **Discuss progress made and achievements reached** in the area of combating gender-based violence through the implementation of the three project phases: (1) multi-agency co-operation and co-ordination; (2) capacity building – training activities and (3) awareness raising.
- **Exchange good practices and lessons learnt** from government as well as civil society on combating gender-based violence with a focus on victim protection.
- **Identify remaining gaps** and areas where further efforts and commitments are required.

The main findings and outcomes of the conference will be compiled and included in a Key Findings and Outcomes – The Way Forward report. This report will consist of all project materials, key findings and outcomes and a set of recommendations, as a way forward.

The conference language will be English only.
Structure of the Meeting

The conference is organized by the OSCE Secretariat’s TNTD/SPMU in the format of one-and-half day event, starting in the morning of 5 March and closing around noon on 6 March. The first day is opened to all OSCE Delegations.

First day – 5 March

The first day will start with a high-level opening panel, followed by three thematic sessions where the key stakeholders active in the project implementation will engage in an open discussion. OSCE Delegations are invited to raise questions.

A side event will be organized during the first day’s lunch break, where TNTD/SPMU will brief the OSCE Delegations on the replication of the current project in South-Eastern Europe.

Second day – 6 March

The second day will consist of an Expert Group Meeting on Evaluation of the project. With the support of expert evaluators, TNTD/SPMU will conduct a technical discussion with the key national stakeholders on the project outputs and outcomes. This part of the conference is opened to project implementers only.

Conference registration

All sponsored participants are kindly requested to fill in the attached registration form and send it to Ms. Alina Munteanu, TNTD/SPMU (e-mail: alina.munteanu@osce.org), no later than 31 January 2020. For the non-sponsored participants, the deadline for submitting the registration form is 21 February 2020.

For further details about the conference, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Jan Mill, Project Manager (e-mail: jan.mill@osce.org, tel.: +431514366913) or Ms. Alina Munteanu, Project Assistant (e-mail: alina.munteanu@osce.org; tel.: +431514366915).