

DO STATISTICS, FACTS, AND FIGURES EXIST?

Integrated statistics and common indicators to evaluate the scale of violence against women do not exist. Systematic gender-disaggregated data collection and registration of cases are also missing. However, in some countries (Albania, Croatia, Kosovo, and Montenegro), the police have taken steps to register cases and collect data in a unified way in the field of domestic violence.

- In the first national survey on domestic violence in **Albania**, conducted by Refleksione Women's Association in 1995, 68 percent of the women interviewed admitted that they had been beaten by their husband or another male in the family more than once.
- According to a 540-sample survey conducted in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** in 1999, 23 percent of women surveyed stated that their partner beat them. Sixty percent of women never called for help from any institutions.³
- According to research on domestic violence in **Croatia**, 83 percent of women victims who were interviewed have never asked for help from the police, 90% of them have not turned to the centers for social welfare, and 92% have never filed a suit.⁴
- In **Kosovo**, there were 1,054 women who experienced violence and reported it to the police during 2005.⁵
- The only empirical research on domestic violence, conducted in 2000 by the Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women of the Republic of **Macedonia** (ESE), has shown that 61.5 percent of the interviewees were victims of psychological violence. The prevalence of physical violence was 23.9 percent.
- In **Montenegro**, data obtained from abused women who called the SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Podgorica show that every fourth woman stated that her husband beat her up, and every fifth woman was thrown out of their house at least once.⁶
- The Ministry of the Interior in **Serbia** registered a total of 2,591 reported incidents involving violence against women in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina from January 2002 to April 2004.⁷

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENTS:

- To set up national strategies or action plans for the prevention of and response to violence against women, with concrete tasks, deadlines, responsible actors, and an allocated budget
- To set up a governmental institution or body in charge of the implementation, regular monitoring, and evaluation of measures to combat violence against women
- To dedicate a special amount in the state budget to combat violence against women, including appropriate financial support for NGOs working in the field
- To encourage co-operation between the police, health, social services, the judiciary and NGOs, and to develop special protocols based on a multi-disciplinary approach to ensure comprehensive, coordinated, gender-sensitive treatment of and assistance to women victims of violence
- To include special items in the school curricula, both at the elementary and secondary school levels, about stereotyped roles of the sexes, gender equality and violence against women, specifically
- To introduce mandatory, continuous pre-service and in-service training programs on violence against women, including treatment of victims, for all law enforcement professionals
- To amend existing media laws to include special provisions on the portrayal of women and violence against women; to encourage the elaboration of codes of conduct for media professionals, which take into account the issue of violence against women; to encourage media watch organizations to include tasks regarding violence against women and sexism in their mandate
- To develop integrated statistics and common indicators to measure the scale of violence against women; to begin systematic data collection and the registration of cases at all relevant law enforcement professions

3 A National NGO Report on Women's Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1999, pp. 34-35.

4 D. Oroščak & A. Štulhofer, Interpretacija rezultata istraživanja nasilja nad ženama u Hrvatskoj/Interpretation of results of the research on violence against women in Croatia, (Državni zavod za zaštitu obitelji, materinstva i mladih), Zagreb, 2003.

5 Interview with Sergeant Tahire Haxhollbi by Luljeta Demolli on January 10, 2006, Information Office in the Division for Domestic Violence, Directorate for Serious Crimes.

6 Jelena Radulovic, "Violence in family", SOS hotline Podgorica, 2003.

7 Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality of Vojvodina, 2004.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:

DO THE GOVERNMENTS CARE?

A review of the situation in

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro¹

FACT SHEET
2006

(...) It is the responsibility and in the interest of states as well as a priority of national policies to safeguard the right of women not to be subjected to violence of any kind or by any person. To this end, states may not invoke custom, religion or tradition as a means of evading this obligation.

/Council of Europe: Recommendation Rec(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the protection of women against violence, Appendix

- There are no **governmental institutions or bodies** for the implementation, regular monitoring and evaluation of measures to combat violence against women.

- There are no specific **policies or action plans** to combat violence against women in all its forms.

However, Croatia has a National Strategy on the Protection against Violence in the Family 2005-2007, prescribing 27 short and long-term measures for implementation. Croatia and Macedonia have special references to the phenomenon of violence against women or domestic violence in their national action plans on gender equality. In Croatia, the National Policy for Promoting Equality established six goals to combat domestic violence. In Macedonia, one of the goals of the National Plan of Action on Gender Equality is "Visualization and dealing with violence against women in the private and societal life," but it does not allocate special deadlines, responsible actors and a budget for the implementation. In Montenegro, one of the seven areas of concern of the Draft National Plan of Action for the Achievement of Gender Equality deals specifically with violence against women. In Albania, Gender Alliance for Development Center in cooperation with Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, with the support of UNICEF, implemented the project "Drafting the National Strategy against Violence in the Family." In the framework of this project a group of experts will draft the Strategy for a six months period from May 2006.

- There are no special budget lines in the state budgets for combating violence against women. While non-governmental organizations do tremendous work in the field, there are no **budget lines** to support their operation and activities.



1 This fact sheet has been prepared as part of the Violence Against Women Monitoring Survey of the Open Society Institute's Network Women's Program, based on the Council of Europe's *Recommendation Rec(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the protection of women against violence*. The information was provided by the following experts: As prof. Dr. Edlira Haxhiymeri, Aurela Bozo (Albania), Dr. Nada Ier Sofronić (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Sandra Benčić, Sanja Sarnavka, Adriana Bego (Croatia), Luljeta Demolli (Kosovo), Stojan Misev, Marija Gelevska, Gabriela Mihova, (Macedonia), Vanja Mikulić, Irena Milatović, Biljana Branković (Serbia). For more information on the Program see: www.soros.org/women.

DO EDUCATION AND TRAINING EXIST ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

AND GENDER EQUALITY?

The stereotyped roles of the sexes and violence against women are special issues that have not been built in the basic educational curricula. Violence against women is not a part of the basic, vocational and in-service education and training curricula of the different law enforcement professions.

➤ There are no **special items** on gender stereotypes, gender equality and violence against women in the **elementary and secondary school curricula**.

➤ There are no **special items** on violence against women, including domestic violence in the **majority of the cases**. However, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Law on Gender Equality states that contents promoting gender equality should be an integral part of the curriculum at all educational levels. Gender equality governmental bodies have developed strategies for the introduction of a gender component at all educational level. However, at this point, there are no special items, or topics regarding violence against women in the primary and secondary school curricula. In Croatia, the National Strategy for the Protection against Violence in the Family aims to promote the elimination of stereotypes about violence in the family, while paying special attention to primary, secondary, and higher educational programmes. In Kosovo, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with UNICEF, established a project to introduce a new subject into the primary school curricula entitled “Life skills,” in which gender issues, including violence against women, received special attention.

➤ There are no **special items** on violence against women, including domestic violence in the **majority of the cases**. However, in Albania, modules on violence against women are included in the curricula of the School of Magistrates and Public Health Program, and in social programs (Social Work, Journalism, and Psychology). There are some attempts to introduce this module in master programs for lawyers and medical doctors. In Kosovo, students at the Police Service College received mandatory training on domestic violence, and in Montenegro, this is expected to happen in the future.

➤ There are no **mandatory, in-service training programs** on violence against women **for law enforcement professionals** in the vast majority of cases. However, in Montenegro, police officers are obliged to attend a training program on domestic violence; with NGO trainers from SOS Hotline Podgorica. There has been such an initiative in Serbia, but only on a project level. In the Sarajevo Canton of Bosnia and Herzegovina police officers dealing with violence against women and domestic violence have to attend training on domestic violence, conducted by governmental and NGO trainers.

DO THE MEDIA CARE ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

The media does not effectively use its potential to promote non-stereotyped images of women and men. Although it gives special attention to the 16 Days of Activism Campaign on Gender Violence, does not alert the public to the issue throughout the year.

➤ There are no **media law provisions** dealing specifically with the portrayal of women and the problem of violence against women.

➤ However, in Kosovo, according to the Law on Gender Equality, it is prohibited to transmit, publish, and distribute materials and information, in print and broadcast, based on gender discrimination, and it is prohibited to publicly show individuals in an offensive, abusive, and insulting manner regarding gender and sexual orientation. The Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina states that the media is obliged to develop awareness on gender equality. In Croatia, the National Strategy for the Protection against Violence in the Family aims to promote the elimination of stereotypes about violence in the family, paying special attention – among others – to the media.

➤ There are no **codes of conduct or guidelines** for the media, which would take into account the specific issue of violence against women. Existing codes address in general the prohibition of discrimination, and sometimes the portrayal of violence and pornography, and the protection of victims' personal rights.

➤ There are no **specific tasks** allocated to state-level **media watch organizations** regarding the issues of violence against women and sexism.

➤ There are no **special items** on the issue of violence against women in **media school curricula**, with the exception of Albania, where a one-semester special course on gender issues, including violence against women, exists at the Journalism Program of the University of Tirana.

DO WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE HAVE LEGAL PROTECTION?

In recent years, legislation has started to address domestic violence and trafficking. However, the rules of different legal proceedings do not prescribe special conditions and measures for hearing and treatment of the victims and witnesses of violence against women to avoid their re-victimization and ensure appropriate protection.

➤ There is only one law in the region containing the **explicit definition and punishment of gender based violence**: the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

➤ There are special **laws on domestic violence** in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo, while Albania and Montenegro are in the process of adopting such legislation. Macedonia and Serbia regulate domestic violence in the Criminal Code as a special offence.

➤ There are no detailed **codes of conducts, rules, and guidelines** ensuring the same procedure in different law enforcement professions (such as the police, courts, and health care services) for cases of violence against women.

➤ However, steps have been taken to guarantee the unified procedure of the police regarding domestic violence in the majority of the countries. A good example is Croatia, where the Rules of Procedure in Cases of Family Violence is applicable for the police, judiciary, health, and educational institutions, as well as centers for social care. In Montenegro, the competent bodies in the fields of domestic violence and trafficking signed Memorandums of Understanding to develop inter-professional cooperation. In Macedonia, NGOs have taken serious steps to develop protocols and internal procedures for stakeholders in the field of domestic violence, and to establish a unified criminal and civil justice system.

➤ There are no legal requirements to provide **information to victims about their rights and the available services**.

➤ However, in Kosovo, the Law on Domestic Violence requires all law enforcement bodies to provide victims with information about their rights, obligations, and services available. In Croatia, there is a general legal requirement to inform victims about their rights and obligations, but not about the available services.

➤ There are no state-funded, nationwide established shelters to accommodate victims. Most of the shelters are run by NGOs, and are funded by international and foreign donors. The number of shelters varies from three to ten per country. The numbers of available places in the shelters are between 50 and 200 per country, which is far behind the international recommendations.²

➤ However: the Macedonian government established and finances five **shelters**, while the Albanian government supports one. In Croatia, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare dedicated a budget line for the support of safe houses on a contract-base, providing 356 Euro per person per month for women in shelters. In Montenegro, one “tripartite” shelter exists: NGO Montenegro Women’s Lobby, established a shelter for victims of trafficking in human beings in 2004, with the funding and support of the Government and International Organization for Migration.

➤ There are no state-organized and funded **free legal aid** systems for the victims of violence against women, except in Kosovo, where the Victims’ Advocacy and Assistance Unit in the Supreme Court offers free legal aid and representation to the victims.

➤ There are no **intervention programs for the perpetrators** of violence against women in the majority of cases.

➤ However, in Croatia, the law on domestic violence created legal preconditions for sending the perpetrators into psycho-social treatment. Based on this, a pilot project that focused on working with perpetrators was started by the Society for Psychological Help in 2003, in cooperation with the State Attorney’s Office. In Serbia, the Centers for Social Work organize programs for offenders, but not in a systematic manner. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Law on protection of domestic violence created legal obligations for sending the perpetrators into psycho-social treatment but it is not implemented in the practice yet.

² The Group of Specialists for Combating Violence against Women, appointed by the Council of Europe, recommended in 1998 that there should be one shelter place per 7,500 of the population.