

The role of men in combating violence against women
A meeting of grassroots organisations that engage men and boys in
combating violence against women

Vienna, 17 June 2014

MEETING REPORT

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Objectives of the meeting

- Discuss the findings of FRA's survey on gender-based violence against women
- Discuss how data and research evidence can be used for and feed into the work of organisations engaging men and boys in combating violence against women
- Exchange promising practices on how to engage men and boys in combating violence against women

Participants

- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
- 14 representatives of non-government organisations based in nine EU Member States and Norway that specifically work with men and boys to address male violence
- Women against Violence Europe (WAVE)

Results of FRA's survey on gender-based violence against women

The morning session included presentations of the main results of FRA's violence against women survey (VAW), focusing on perpetrators of violence. When presenting the key results of the survey, Joanna Goodey, Head of the Freedoms and Justice Department at FRA, highlighted the importance of engaging practitioners in interpreting and disseminating the survey results. An overview of the methodology and key results was followed by examples of findings from the survey that could feed into awareness raising campaigns, assessment of policy responses and development of training and support services. Aspects that were emphasised included the significance of repeat victimisation by partners, the role of heavy alcohol use in partner violence, and the issue of low reporting rates.

Sami Nevala, Head of the Statistics and Surveys Sector at FRA, informed the meeting about factors that influence a higher prevalence of violence against women. The

¹ DISCLAIMER: Please note that this report is a compilation of the outcomes of the meeting including views and opinions of the participants. Thus, the views or opinions expressed therein are not the official opinions of the FRA.

characteristics of women's current partners were highlighted with respect to those committing violence. As the FRA survey asked women about the gender of perpetrators, the importance of recognising gendered violence was shown by the very high percentages of male perpetrators, particularly in cases of sexual violence, stalking and sexual harassment. Alongside the results of the VAW survey, attention was also drawn to FRA's [LGBT survey](#) on discrimination and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people. This showed similar patterns to the VAW survey regarding the gender of perpetrators.

During the discussion on the survey findings, participants acknowledged the usefulness of the survey for their work with men and boys, as well as with other stakeholders. It was found that the results of FRA's VAW survey largely confirm the outcomes from previous national surveys on the same subject. The discussion mainly concentrated on different ways of interpreting the new information the survey has brought to light, such as how to interpret prevalence rates across countries. While care has to be taken when presenting profiles of perpetrators, in order not to create stereotypes, the information on factors influencing male violence against women was considered extremely helpful for developing more targeted work with men and boys.

From evidence to advice, and the role of data for informing policy makers

In his presentation, Dennis Van Der Veur, Head of Sector Cooperation with EU Institutions and EU Member States within FRA's Communication and Outreach Department, indicated the importance of a continuous dialogue about the survey results with stakeholders, and of targeted communication at different levels. Examples of how the survey results have been used to date by different actors at the EU Member State level were referred to, with emphasis being placed on the role of others (multipliers) to use and take forward the survey results in their own work at the national level.

Arni Hole, Director General at the Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, gave insight into Norwegian policy experiences in the field of combating gender-based violence. Norway has undertaken many initiatives in order to address the root causes of gender-based violence, most notably with respect to gender stereotyping and the socialisation of men and children. Norway has introduced and continues to support awareness raising campaigns, training and support programmes, legal measures and research, and has published a white paper on "men, male roles and gender equality",² the first of its kind in Europe. In her presentation, she indicated that similar initiatives have not so far been taken up more widely by other governments. With the current data available from FRA's VAW survey, civil society organisations working with men against gender-based violence are urged to inform and challenge governments to be responsive and address the root causes of gender-based violence. Men are not only part of the problem, but also part of the solution to the problem.

² Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, *Men, Male Roles and Gender Equality*, Report No. 8 (2008-2009), available at: http://www.engagingmen.net/files/resources/2010/admin/Men_Male_Roles_and_Gender_Equality.pdf.

The role of men – promising practices and how to mobilise men

In line with the focus of the meeting, the role of men in combating violence against women was the subject of presentations by invited experts, with reflections on promising practices in engaging men to address violence against women.

Bert Groen, of the [Netherlands Centre for Social Development \(Movisie\)](#), emphasised the problem of existing social norms and male role models. While violence against women is also a men's issue, men often remain silent about the topic. In order to change social norms, systems should be developed to raise boys in a different way.



Alan O'Neill, of the [Men's Development Network](#) in Ireland, talked about the importance of men thinking about their role and their behaviour. The network brings men together, supporting their self-development through expressing their vulnerability. Besides directly working with men,



the network develops anti-violence programmes (www.mend.ie) in alliance with women's organisations. The network is involved in a variety of initiatives that set out to address male violence, including the [White Ribbon Campaign](#) nationally and internationally; a gender mainstreaming training programme with the National Women's Council (www.nwci.ie); and the '[Turn Off the Red Light](#)' campaign against prostitution in Ireland in alliance with 70 civil society organisations nationally.

Daniel Leal Gonzalez, representing the institutional programme [Hombres por la Igualdad](#) of the municipality of Jerez de la Frontera in Spain, talked about the organisation's promising work with men to prevent violence against women and other men. The programme works on developing alternatives to the traditional male role, which has been to the disadvantage of women as well as men. The organisation is engaged in training and awareness raising campaigns, working with boys in schools, preparing training and dissemination materials such as [Atrévete si eres hombre](#), and promoting the White Ribbon Campaign and the Egalitarian Father's Day, amongst other initiatives. It also tries to make 'gender' a more visible construction and reality for men, as 'gender' is too often seen as a 'women's' issue.



What now? – Results of the discussion on how to engage men in combating gender-based violence against women

During the last part of the day, participants discussed how the data from FRA's VAW survey can be used to move forward. Some of the priorities were:

- to design the focus of initiatives in line with the survey findings. For example, medical staff and doctors are an important contact point for victims of violence against women.
- to provide information to governments and funding bodies. For example, violence against women is not a minority issue but impacts on millions of people.
- to evaluate the success of initiatives on the ground through the use of data. This could be for example with respect to awareness of and reporting to different services for victims of violence, including satisfaction with the services received.

The data is also of use when looking at particular problems faced by grassroots organisations in their work, such as making the importance of the problem of violence against women more visible.

- Awareness needs to be raised, particularly among decisions makers and journalists. A lack of appreciation of the scale and significance of the problem of gender-based violence was clearly identified, whereby recognising 'gender' also implies that men need to be included and actively involved in addressing violence against women.
- The involvement of men in combating violence against women is essential, although views about *how* to engage men still vary.
- Ways of involving men and boys need to be further discussed and explored, with more emphasis needed on promising and successful practices.
- Networking among different types of stakeholders and organisations should be supported, including those that work with men and boys. An exchange of ideas and promising practices for cooperation between organisations working with men and boys together with women's organisations, particularly those that have worked to highlight the extent and nature of violence against women and have supported victims of male violence, was discussed and encouraged. The meeting also facilitated the exchange of information concerning upcoming networking events.
- All partners undertook to use the VAW survey results and other input from the meeting when seeking to involve men in combating gender-based violence, and in their efforts to raise awareness and action at the Member State level.

In conclusion, the meeting provided a platform for organisations working to address male violence against women to become more familiar with FRA's VAW survey and, specifically, its data on the gender and relationship of perpetrators to their female victims.

The meeting concluded by reiterating the impact of collecting and using data for advocacy purposes and its benefits for testing the effectiveness of interventions to address male violence against women.



Participants:

- Ralf Puchert, DISSENS, DE
- Tereza Herdova, The League of Open Men (LOM), CZ
- Alan O'Neill, The Men's Development Network, IE
- Live Mehlum, REFORM, NO
- Daniel Getz, REFORM, NO
- James Buhagiar, Men Against Violence, MT
- Rosa Logar, Men Against Violence, AT and WAVE, AT
- Bert Groen, MOVISIE, NL
- Daniel Leal Gonzalez, Hombres por la igualdad, ES
- Gerhard Meschnigg, White Ribbon, AT
- Peter Szil, expert, HU
- Veli-Matti Toikka, The Federation of mother and child homes and shelters, FI
- Christian Veske, EIGE, LT
- Vanessa Depeyre, WAVE, AT
- FRA: Joanna Goodey, Sami Nevala, Dennis Van Der Veur, Arni Hole, David Reichel, Rossalina Latcheva, Ursula Till-Tentschert, Monica Gutierrez Arques, Bianca Ardelean

Useful links:

<p>Main results report: Violence against women: an EU-wide survey.</p> <p>en (2.5 MB)</p>	
<p>Factsheet: Violence against women: an EU-wide survey</p> <p>bg cs da de el en es et fi fr hr hu it lt lv nl pl pt ro sk sl sv (623.75 KB)</p>	
<p>Summary report: Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Results at a glance</p> <p>de en fr (1.01 MB)</p>	
<p>Interactive online data explorer</p> <p>en</p>	
<p>Technical report: Violence against women: an EU-wide survey – Survey methodology, sample and fieldwork.</p> <p>en (1.15 MB)</p>	

Survey on women's well-being and safety in Europe – Questionnaire

[en](#) (794.41 KB)



Access to reports and news concerning the survey on the FRA

website: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/vaw-survey-main-results>



Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, *Men, Male Roles and Gender Equality*, Report No. 8 (2008-2009), available

at: http://www.engagingmen.net/files/resources/2010/admin/Men_Male_Roles_and_Gender_Equality.pdf.

Practical guide for effective communications initiatives (communication toolkit): <http://www.cdc.gov/violencePrevention/NISVS/index.html>

Report from a high-level conference on men-politics hosted by Germany (report in German): <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Service/Publikationen/publikationen.did=199664.html>

Report on the level of awareness within front-line statutory services of domestic violence and of perpetrator intervention programmes: http://mend.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/MEND_research.pdf