ADDRESSING VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS THROUGH EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

A collaborative and reflective report on sustainable means for addressing and preventing violence in schools. Produced in co-operation with Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland and Romania.

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Council of Europe

Abbreviations list:

CoE – Council of Europe

EDC/HRE – Education for Democratic Citizenship/ Human Rights Education

NGO – Non Governmental Organisation

LGBTIQ – Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Queer

UNCRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

EU – European Union

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Project aims and overview

▬ The main goals of this project have been to raise awareness on school violence, to explore educational policies and practices with regard to school violence and to develop a scheme of recommendations for the promotion of democratic citizenship and the prevention of violence at school. The innovatory aspect of this pilot project in relation to pre-existing models is that:

- ► firstly, it addresses and contextualises the issue of eliminating violence through ECD/HRE in the partici-pant countries;
- ► secondly, it does so by engaging stakeholders and civil society institutions (NGOs, youth organisations) which represent social groups affected by school violence in the violence prevention model.

▬ In this respect the proposed pilot project aims to elaborate a sustainable and contextually relevant model for eliminating violence at school.

▬ The project was developed in three phases:

a. Firstly, it examined the institutional framework, the policies and the research that has been conducted in each partner country with regard to school violence. The national reports produced have been compiled in a comparative report on Research and Policy regarding violence at school in the partner countries.

b. Secondly, it conducted a qualitative research based on focus-group interviews at the school community level, aiming to explore the participants' perceptions regarding violence at school. The national reports on the analysis of the focus group interviews have been further elaborated in a comparative report on Conceptualisations of Violence in the partner countries.

c. Thirdly, it attempted to develop a reflective scheme on sustainable means for combatting violence and on suggestions for further action aimed at preventing and combatting violence in schools and building a democratic school culture.

Kick-off meeting, Podgorica, Montenegro, 5-6 november 2015

1.2. Basic assumptions of the project and methodological approach

► School violence not only infringes upon the right to education per se, but it also violates other fundamental human rights, predominantly those of the right of the individual to human dignity and personal integrity. Therefore, eliminating violence at school is of primary importance for the embedment of human rights, democratic citizenship and social cohesion.

► Violence expressed at school cannot be read and understood as an exclusively school phenomenon. The central concept of the project is that violence at school stems from social hierarchies embedded in the broader society and within educational institutions in particular; school violence is reproducing stereotypes that generate prejudice, isolate, stigmatise and victimise certain social groups or practices. Prejudicial practices and bullying often victimise the less empowered (vulnerable) groups, notably minority and migrant groups, persons with disability, LGBTs.

► Even though there has been considerable activity and policy intervention on the subject, it cannot be assumed that there is a clear and commonly accepted conceptualisation of violence. This pilot project has taken into consideration existing research and education practices focussing on the elimination of school violence, such as those developed by UNESCO, and aims to further elaborate an understanding on the way violence is perceived by the crucial social actors who make up the school community. Therefore the project adopts a bottom up approach.

► Understanding and addressing the phenomenon presupposes the engagement of the whole school community and its opening to the local society.

► The questions, which we posed to the school community, are: is there violence at school? And if there is, what are its characteristics? Who are those affected by it? Can we identify specific social characteristics of the perpetrator and the victim? Is there any correlation between social hierarchies and the affected social categories?

► An effective exploration of these questions requires giving voice to those social categories which are potentially the most affected by violence. Therefore, the methodology to investigate the issue was based on focus group interviews, composed both of all the social groups operating within the school and of civil society representatives associated with groups affected by violence.

1.3. List of national reports

1. GREECE

► Zambeta, E., Leontsini, M., Askouni, N., Toura, K., Papadakou Y., Psochios, N. (2015) *Policies on combatting violence in Greek schools,* report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Athens, Ministry of Education, Research & Religious Affairs - National & Kapodistrian University of Athens.

► Leontsini, M., Zambeta, E. Askouni, N., Papadakou Y., Psochios, N. (2015) *Research review on school violence in Greece*, report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Athens, Ministry of Education, Research & Religious Affairs - National & Kapodistrian University of Athens.

► Zambeta, E., Askouni, N., Leontsini, M., Papadakou, Y., Psochios, N., Chalari, M. (2016) *Conceptualisations of school violence in Greece: focus group analysis*, report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Athens, Ministry of Education, Research & Religious Affairs - National & Kapodistrian University of Athens.

2. HUNGARY

► Lázár, I. (2015a) *A review of the legal framework and policies on combatting school violence in Hungary,* report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Budapest, Eötvös Loránd University with the Hungarian Institute of Educational Research and Development (OFI).

► Lázár, I. (2015b) *A review of research results and action programmes on combatting school violence in Hungary*, report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Budapest, Eötvös Loránd University with the Hungarian Institute of Educational Research and Development (OFI).

- Enyedi, A., Lázár, I. (2016) *Focus group analysis, HUNGARY*, report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Budapest, Hungarian Institute of Educational Research and Development (OFI).

3. MONTENEGRO

- Kascelan, V. (2015a) *Policy*, report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Podgorica, The Bureau of Education of Montenegro.
- Vujović, S. (2015b) *Research*, report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Podgorica, UNESCO Chair in Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights, UCG.
- Vujović, S. (2016) *Focus group content analysis,* report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Podgorica, UNESCO Chair in Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights, UCG.

4. POLAND

- Styslavska, O. & Rafalska, M. (2015a) *Policy*, report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Warsaw, Educator Association.
- Styslavska, O. & Rafalska, M. (2015b) *Research*, report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Warsaw, Educator Association.
- Rafalska, M., Styslavska, O. (2016) *Focus group content analysis*, report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Warsaw, Regional In-Service Teacher Training Centre - "Educator" Association.

5. ROMANIA

- Mitulescu, S. & Scoda, A. (2015) *Policies on combatting school violence in Romania* , report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Bucharest, Institute of Educational Sciences.
- Mitulescu, S., Scoda, A., Şandru, I. (2015) *Research review Romania,* report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Bucharest, Institute of Educational Sciences.
- Mitulescu, S., Scoda, A., Şandru, I. (2016) *Focus–group discussion on violence in school: Romania*, report on the Council of Europe's pilot project «Addressing Violence in Schools through EDC/HRE», Bucharest, Institute of Educational Sciences.

2. POLICY AND RESEARCH ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN GREECE, HUNGARY, MONTENEGRO, POLAND AND ROMANIA – COMPARATIVE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

■■■ This chapter aims to critically understand the way the concept of school violence is understood in Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland and Romania, as well as to outline and compare the basic findings of the project regarding:

a. the legal framework that applies in each partner country regarding school violence;

b. the type of policies that have been developed in order to address and deal with the phenomenon of violence in the respective educational systems;

c. the conceptualisation and approaches to school violence in the research that has been conducted in the partner countries.

2.2. Policies and legal framework

2.2.1. Legislation related to school violence

■■■ In all participant countries the ratification of the UNCRC has developed social and legal sensitivity on the violation of children's rights and violence towards children. Respect towards children's human dignity and the elimination of practices involving physical or mental violence, children's abuse and neglect, all are matters of growing social awareness and legal provision. In certain cases (i.e. Romania) the prevention of children's trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation is a matter of particular concern in the country's legal system.

■■■ There is no general definition of school violence in the legal framework of the participant countries. As it is argued in the case of Poland, for example, "peer violence is a complex phenomenon that includes pedagogical, sociological and legal perspectives. All attempts to describe it as a legal phenomenon would cause concept narrowing. That is why an explicit definition of school violence does not exist in Polish Law." (Styslavska & Rafalska, 2015a, p. 2).

■■■ Relevant legislation varies in content and level of jurisdiction (i.e. general codification of criminal offense, acts and laws ratified by the Parliament or orders and circulars by governmental bodies). The legal framework that applies in the case of violence towards children and school violence in particular, can be part of the Criminal Code and general Criminal Law, Family Law or Educational legislation. It refers to the protection of children's human dignity (Hungary), prohibition of discrimination and violence (Montenegro), the prohibition of corporal punishment at school (Greece and Romania) and to the wider management and organisation of school life that eliminates violence (Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland, Romania). A recent amendment in the Greek Criminal Code stipulates that "infliction of damage by continuous cruel behaviour" is a criminal offense, a provision that develops the legal ground for cases of bullying to be treated in the Greek judicial context.

■■■ Notably, there is a growing awareness regarding asymmetric relationships embedded in violent incidents. In Greece and Poland there is a specific provision of criminal liability when there is dependency on the perpetrator (i.e. children in custody of adults, either in the home environment or in schools).

■■■ The basic legal provisions related to school violence in the participant countries are outlined in Table 1, (see Appendix).

2.2.2. Policies

Independent authorities on children's rights

▬▬ The Citizen's Advocate (Ombudsman), an independent authority appointed by parliament for the protection and promotion of citizen's rights, is established in all partner countries. In some cases this authority is further developed and differentiated by Deputy Ombudsmen responsible for gender, social policy or children's issues. In the cases of Greece, Poland and Romania there is a Deputy Ombudsman specialising in children's rights. In Greece the Children's Ombudsman has taken decisive action in addressing the issue of school violence and has initiated several projects, action programmes and even regulations made on the part of the Ministry of Education (Zambeta et al., 2015, p. 7). Moreover, this institution has acted as a mediator and negotiated several reported incidents of violence in schools, representing a communicative and dialogic model for the elimination of the phenomenon.

Central institutions

▬▬ In some partner countries there is a central institution or scheme responsible for the monitoring and prevention of school violence, under the auspices of either the Ministry of Education (i.e. the 'Observatory for the Prevention of School Violence and Bullying' in Greece, the 'Office of Educational Commissioner on Educational Rights' in Hungary) or operating in the wider central government level (as in the case of the 'National Council to Prevent and Combat Violence in School', established by the Ministry of Education, in Romania).

National networks, policies and programmes

▬▬ In all partner countries school violence is a matter of social concern and a wide range of activities, institutions, policies and programmes are enacted aiming at raising awareness, prevention and elimination of the phenomenon.

▬▬ In all partner countries there are quite extensive thematic national programmes on the prevention and combatting of school violence. Several of these projects are EU funded in Greece, Poland and Romania. Thematic projects mainly focus on prevention of peer violence and cyber-bullying. Health education programmes also address violence in various ways by promoting mental and emotional health and producing supportive material for teachers.

▬▬ A curriculum policy addressing school violence is mentioned in the case of Poland, a variety of curriculum interventions are developed in Romania, while an institution such as a 'national day' devoted to activities for raising awareness on school violence has been initiated in Greece.

▬▬ In Poland systematic scrutiny of the school environment through video recording is part of the preventive policy, while the Police are involved in the development of policy for combatting violence and anti-bullying at school in the cases of Poland and Romania.

Focus group, Bucharest, Romania, January 2015

Educational material and teacher training

▬▬▬ The above programmes and initiatives undertaken in the partner countries have produced a wide range of educational material aimed at facilitating teachers and the educational community to cope with school violence. This material includes:

a. questionnaires and tools for early diagnosis, recording and assessment of school violence (Greece, Montenegro);

b. 'tools for the development of social competences of teachers', manuals and guides for preventing and combatting school violence including lesson plans, teachers' guides, videos etc. (i.e. Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland, Romania);

c. adaptation of anti-bullying programmes that have been implemented elsewhere, such as the Finnish KIVA project (Hungary);

d. various and extensive teacher training schemes (Greece, Montenegro, Poland, Romania).

▬▬▬ The basic institutions, policies and measures adopted in the partner countries are outlined in Table 2, (see Appendix).

2.2.3. Civil society activism

▬▬▬ Civil society was active in addressing the issue of school violence long before state intervention. In Poland, for example, the Programme 'School without Violence', an initiative between regional newspapers and the Orange Foundation, was launched in 2006, almost a decade prior to the governmental programmes 'Safe and Friendly school' and the 'Safe+' project that were initiated in 2014 and 2015 respectively (Styslavska & Rafalska, 2015a). In several cases civil society activism brings to the fore and addresses forms of violence that are silenced by official policy, as, for example, in the cases of Romania and Greece regarding the rights of LGBT students (Mitulescu & Scoda, 2015, p. 17 & 21; Zambeta et al., 2015, p. 12)

▬▬▬ Moreover, civil society also continues to be active when state policy on school violence develops, undertaking several initiatives and action programmes, in parallel to or in collaboration with governmental bodies.

▬▬▬ However, the programmes initiated by civil society differ in length, effectiveness, sustainability and social impact.

Seminar held in Sinaia, Romania, 9-11 March 2016

2.3. The conceptualisation of violence in the participant countries

2.3.1. Terminology used

▬▬ In most of the countries the use of the terms school violence, aggression and bullying are interchange-able. At the level of legislation, there is no differentiation among different terms used, nor explicit definition of violence. Notably, school violence may also be equivalent to peer violence (such as in Polish legislation). However, even if there is an absence of different terms, various forms of violence can be recognised (e.g., in Romanian and Montenegrin laws). Furthermore, violence may be connected to discrimination, a term which is generally applied without mentioning any distinctive form (homophobia, racism etc.). At research level, terms are also interchangeable in most countries, not always because of being rather relevant concepts, but as there may be no terminology used in national language (e.g. in Montenegro there is no terminology for bullying).

▬▬ In Poland there is a clear distinction among these three terms, at least at research level.

▬▬ In Greece there is a term equivalent to bullying, but the English term is also widely used in the public discourse.

▬▬ Table 3 (see Appendix) outlines definitions of violence in relevant legislation, policy and research in the partner countries.

2.3.2. Approaches to violence

▬▬ Violence is mainly understood as a phenomenon emerging among peers. The majority of the research reviewed, emphasises violence or bullying among students (Lázár, 2015b; Leontsini et al., 2015, Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2015; Styslavska & Rafalska, 2015b; Vujović, 2015b), while other power relations, such as teacher-student (Lázár, 2015b; Leontsini et al., 2015; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2015; Styslavska & Rafalska, 2015b; Vujović, 2015b), parent-student and student-school staff (Leontsini et al., 2015; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2015) are not extensively studied.

▬▬ The concept of the imbalance of power is mainly conceptualised in individualistic terms. Olweus[1] pro-vides for the dominant example in research and definition of violence (Lázár, 2015b; Leontsini et al., 2015). The dominant approaches to violence stem basically from (Clinical and Social) Psychology (Leontsini et al., 2015; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2015), while sociological and interdisciplinary approaches are not preferred by the researchers. In Poland, there is a paradigm referring to 'school atmosphere', 'school culture' and 'school climate' as a methodological approach to the phenomenon of school violence.

▬▬ Table 4 (see Appendix) summarises the basic approaches to violence in research conducted in the partner countries.

2.3.3. Social variables – voiced and silenced

Origin

▬▬ The concept of origin appears in the reviews from two of the participating countries. There is no explicit or implicit reference to the concept in the reviews by Hungary, Poland and Montenegro. In Romania's review, 'increase of the general freedom of movement' (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2015, p. 5) is mentioned as a pos-sible 'social cause' of school violence, without any direct reference to immigration. Moreover, Roma children in Romania are mentioned as a socially vulnerable group often physically victimised. In Greece, while (national) origin or ethnic belonging can constitute targets of racist attacks, it is reported that there are no significant data to estimate the importance of this variable in school violence research (Leontsini et al., 2015, p. 12).

▬▬ Table 5 (see Appendix) outlines approaches to the variable of origin in the study of school violence in the partner countries.

Gender

▬▬ The gender variable is present in all the countries' reviews, but it is mainly conceptualised as 'sex'. Gender is basically understood in biological terms as a difference between boys and girls, with the exception of Greece,

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1. Dan Olweus is a professor of psychology at the University of Bergen. During the 1970s he was involved in what is regarded as the first research and intervention project on bullying at schools. His first book on bullying was issued in Sweden in 1973 and translated in English in 1978 under the title Aggression in the Schools. Bullies and Whipping Boys. His theories and his prevention programmes have been very influential in studies and projects dealing with violence in schools.

where a report of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights studying homophobia is presented (Leontsini et al., 2015, p. 11). Differentiations between boys and girls are reported either according to their roles in bullying situations or to the forms of bullying they engage in. Boys are found to be more frequently involved in bullying as perpetrators (Lázár, 2015b; Leontsini et al., 2015; Styslavska & Rafalska, 2015b) or victims (Leontsini et al., 2015; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2015; Styslavska & Rafalska, 2015) and rate higher than girls in physical victimisation (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2015; Styslavska & Rafalska, 2015b). As far as the forms of bullying are concerned, there are findings in the reports from all the participating countries that girls are related to indirect, non-physical bullying, while boys are more related to physical bullying. Other findings are that girls are more eager to talk to family or friends, unlike boys, whose fear of stigmatisation as "cowards" entails the concealment of being a victim of bullying (Leontsini et al., 2015).

▬▬▬ Table 6 (see Appendix) outlines gender as a variable in the study of violence in the partner countries.

Socio-economic status

▬▬▬ In most cases socio-economic status is not studied and when it is, it is not considered as a variable to violence. Evidence however, indicates that different social contexts have implications in the extent of violence. In Hungary and Poland, research indicates differences in the extent of violence among different types of schools (Lázár, 2015b; Styslavska & Rafalska, 2015b). When differences in findings among types of schools emerge, this is not explicitly connected to socio-economic factors. In so far as types of schools are mentioned, vocational schools seem to have a higher level of aggression when compared to grammar schools, where 'violent acts are less frequent' (Lázár, 2015b, p. 10; Styslavska & Rafalska, 2015b). These findings could be studied further as they provide evidence for a correlation between socio-economic background and violence at school. There is abundant research to support the idea that school choice is 'systematically related to social class differences and to the reproduction of social hierarchies' (Ball, Bowe & Gewirtz, 1996, p. 89; see also Reay & Ball, 1998; Reay & Lucey, 2000; Reay & Lucey, 2003), meaning that working-class students are heavily represented in vocational education (Shavit & Müller, 2000; Nylund, 2012), while middle class students constitute the majority of students in grammar schools (Harris & Rose, 2013). Taking into account that usually there is a significant differentiation in the socio-economic background of the student population between vocational and grammar schools, the above finding concerning types of schools could be interpreted as an indication of positive correlation between violent behaviour and socio-economic status. On the other hand, the socio-economic status of the family is more explicitly related to school violence: parents' low socio-economic status is connected both to victimisation (Leontsini et al., 2015; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2015; Styslavska & Rafalska, 2015b) and to perpetration (Leontsini et al., 2015, Styslavska & Rafalska, 2015b).

▬▬▬ Table 7 (see Appendix) refers to socio-economic status as a variable in the study of school violence.

2.4. Concluding remarks

Awareness: who addresses school violence?

▬▬▬ Although school violence is a matter of concern in all partner countries there is no common understanding on the definition of the term as well as on the categorisation of the different forms of violence.

▬▬▬ The UNCRC has had an impact on the perceptions of children's rights, a fact reflected in the discourses regarding protection of the child's 'human dignity' and in the policies addressing school violence as well. Moreover, EU policies and funding mechanisms have played a vital role in the formation of a policy agenda regarding school violence in most of the partner countries. A wide range of institutions and networks aiming at the prevention of school violence are active in all partner countries.

▬▬▬ Civil society seems to precede state policy in addressing the issue and taking action regarding school violence. In several cases civil society activism brings to the fore and addresses forms of violence that are silenced by official policy. Any attempt at raising awareness and developing sustainable strategies for prevention of school violence should take advantage of and include civil society.

▬▬▬ There is a question, however, with regard to schools and educational communities: do schools and educational communities perceive violence as an educational problem and address it as matter of concern, or are they at the receiving end of policy initiated by central institutions? And if so, and to the extent that violence is part of the reality of education, what should be done for the education community to be engaged in the EDC/HRE discourse, deal with and effectively prevent school violence?

Means for combatting violence

A wide range of projects producing educational material and teacher training schemes has been implemented in the partner countries. It seems, however, that there are two emerging discourses on dealing with violence that might be seen as mutually conflicting, though in some cases they co-exist in the same national context:

a. A communicative, diagnostic and conflict resolution discourse represented mainly by Greece and Montenegro. The importance of a 'whole community approach' is also underlined by Poland and Romania.

b. A discourse underlining safety and order by the use of surveillance mechanisms in the school community (video-cameras) and police involvement (i.e. Poland and Romania). Police involvement for safety and crime prevention is also mentioned in Hungary (Lázár, 2015a, p. 10).

Workshop, Budapest, Hungary, 11th April, 2016

Emerging issues for further study

Since school violence seems to be a slippery and ambiguous concept, it is interesting to study the ways the different stakeholders, such as those participating in the interviews that have been conducted within the focus groups in the context of this project, understand it. To what extent do the various stakeholders internalise distinctions elaborated in research with regard to violence (for example: in Poland, there is a distinction in research between the terms violence, aggression and bullying. Do the focus group informants internalise this distinction in their discourses?). One of the usual problems of research is the dissemination of results and the communication of its findings to the relevant stakeholders and the wider society.

As far as the means for combatting violence are concerned, how do the various stakeholders talk about the two emerging and possibly mutually conflicting discourses? (i.e. in Poland and Romania there seems to be a tendency towards coping with school violence by the use of surveillance mechanisms within the school community and police involvement. Is this a matter of concern for the focus group's participants? Are there similar tendencies or concerns in other partner countries? How important is the involvement of the community in coping with school violence, according to the stakeholders?).

There seem to be certain silences in policy and research, as for example the relationship between violence and social discriminatory practices with regard to homophobia, xenophobia or social inequality. In some cases the obscure issue of 'the imbalance of power' is mentioned without further exemplification of the social variables of this process. How is this issue dealt with on the part of the various stakeholders of the school community?

These issues will be further explored and discussed in the next chapter.

3. CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL – COMPARATIVE REPORT ON FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

3.1. Introduction

▬ This chapter aims to summarise and compare the findings of the focus group interviews that were conducted during this pilot project. Eight focus groups were conducted in total: each country held either one (Hungary, Poland) or two (Greece, Montenegro, Romania) focus group interviews. The main objectives were to explore the extent to which violence at school is a matter of concern, the ways in which crucial stakeholders understand and manage violence, the perceived factors related to violence and the stakeholders' recommendations on needed interventions, in order to combat violence. The focus groups took place during December 2015 and January 2016.

▬ The focus group participants represented a range of stakeholders in the school community: teachers, school principals, parents, school psychologists, school advisers etc., as well as members of activist groups or other organisations who are active in the area of education. Greece and Poland focused on primary education stakeholders, while Hungary, Montenegro and Romania also included secondary education stakeholders in their focus groups. Two police representatives participated in one of Montenegro's focus groups.

▬ All the interviews were video and/or sound recorded.

▬ The research teams of the participant countries reported that the participants were actively engaged in the discussion and in some cases they asked for feedback or follow-up meetings (i.e. in Hungary).

▬ The outline of the questions that were asked during the focus group interviews is as follows:

► Is school violence a matter of concern to your school community?

► How is it reported?

► What are the characteristics of perpetrators?

► What are the characteristics of victims?

► Where do incidents of school violence take place?

► Could you please give us specific examples of school violence?

► Are xenophobia, racism, and homophobia issues likely to generate school violence?

► Is the school community generating violence? In what ways?

► Could you please tell us how you believe that school communities can be helped to cope with school violence?

Focus group on Salamina Island, Greece, 23rd January 2016

3.2.1. Awareness of violence at school

School violence has been studied and reported as a global phenomenon affecting many core institutions across the globe (Akiba, Letendre, Baker & Goesling 2002). According to the feedback from this pilot project, violence is a universal phenomenon that is inherent in social relations and might occur in various settings. Since school is a social institution where relations are being formed, violence is an integral part of it. Schools are potential sites of violence and violence permeates them as it permeates any other social institution (Zambeta et al., 2016). Consequently, in the view of all the partner countries, school violence is a matter of huge concern (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016).

> I believe that schools are places where violence is expressed. Not only violence but everything that we, teachers, parents and children, carry with us, it [school] is a very small space, a small community where things are highlighted, (…) and things that come from outside the school are being reproduced here.
>
> (School Principal, Greece, p. 6)

Participants of the two focus groups in Montenegro point out that violence is an important matter of concern, since violent incidents are an everyday phenomenon. Hence, school violence should be addressed by society as a whole (Vujović, 2016). In Hungary, school violence is perceived as serious and worrying. In the view of the Hungarian participants, violent incidents interfere with the teaching process as children tend to have extremely emotional responses and they need time to calm down (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016). For the participants of the focus groups in Romania, violence in schools is a matter of serious concern and an important subject of discussion, due to the frequency of violent occurrences (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016).

> We discuss this issue because it is frequent in our school; we deal mostly with verbal violence. I discuss with the pupils in class about the forms of violence, we try to find solutions; we analyse case studies and we provide personal development activities to the children.
>
> (School counsellor, Romania, p. 3)

In Greece likewise, violence at school is a matter of concern. There is recognition among the participants that there is evidence of violence in schools. However, some of the participants argue that nowadays it is less apparent than in the past (Zambeta et al., 2016). They mainly refer to physical violence that takes the form of physical punishment exercised by teachers, a practice that seems to have decreased. The improvement in the issue of violence taking the form of physical punishment is related to the institutional framework and the prohibition of corporal punishment of children by law; it is also related to changes in teaching methods in the direction of anti-authoritarian education (ibid). The claims of the Greek participants that this form of physical violence is declining are in agreement with the claims of the Montenegrin focus group's participants.

In Poland, according to the focus group's participants, school violence has been a constant presence in schools, and as a result it is a matter of great concern (Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016). The Polish participants think that violence has been spreading and changing its forms especially among younger students. The change in the forms of violence is visible especially in the sphere of new information-communication technologies. On the other hand, some participants claim that even though cyber violence has appeared, school violence is still eminent (ibid).

> The scale of the phenomenon is growing. There is more and more violence and it has been constantly taking on new forms. A new type of violence has appeared – cyber violence.
>
> (School Pedagogue, Poland, p. 3)

3.2.2. Defining violence

Based on the focus groups' analyses, it can be argued that there is not a commonly accepted, clear and explicit definition of school violence mostly because school violence is a very complex and highly ambivalent phenomenon (see also Benbenishty & Astor, 2005). Violence is a slippery term, which covers a huge and frequently changing range of physical, emotional, and symbolic practices, situations and relationships, but also a controversial term (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016; see also Henry, 2000).

> However, the definition of violence is subjective. Among parents, teachers and students. (...) and for me this is even more interesting to discuss, beyond the definition of bullying and the education about bullying, what is violence, where does it begin, what are the characteristics of violence at school?
>
> (Activist group 2, Greece, p. 5)

In the case of Poland, for example, the focus group participants analyse all forms of aggressive behaviour as violence (Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016). In Greece too, there are views that any aggressive practice, either at school or outside the school at a football match for example, or anything that causes harm to someone, is violence (Zambeta et al., 2016). In Hungary, the participants agree that there is no clear-cut framework within which aggression and violence can be understood and defined (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016).

Dissemination event helid in Paproc Duza, Poland, 11th March 2016

> For one person verbal abuse is the most painful, for another it is physical assault, while for yet another person being excluded from a social circle is more devastating than being beaten every other day.
>
> (NGO representative, Hungary, p. 4).

According to the Hungarian participants, there are cultural differences in defining what violent or unacceptable behaviour is; what is understood as violence depends on the context, the perpetrator and the victim (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016). For example, it was mentioned that children could be rough while they are playing (e.g. in sports) but this is not considered as violence as long as all members understand it as *play*. As a consequence it can be difficult for a teacher to estimate the situation and decide whether he or she should intervene (ibid).

Most of the participants use various different terms in their descriptions of violent incidents. In Poland, the participants mostly use the terms aggression and violence, and sometimes interchangeably (Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016; see also Astor, Benbenishty, Pitner, & Zeira, 2004). Greek participants use terms such as 'tension', 'systematic annoyance', 'fights', 'quarrel', 'conflicts', 'tough guy', 'macho', but most often 'bullying' comes up (Zambeta et al., 2016). In Montenegro as well, the most commonly used term in the description of violent incidents at school is 'bullying' (Vujović, 2016), unlike Poland where bullying is not mentioned at all (Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016).

Bullying, for some of the participants, is only an entry point to the multi-faceted phenomenon of school violence, while for some others it is used to describe a whole spectrum of aggression (Zambeta et al., 2016; Vujović, 2016; see also Bickmore, 2011). Some of the participants recognise mainly physical violence and maltreatment as bullying and tend to emphasise the physical effects on bullied students describing other kinds of violence (verbal etc.) as 'normal' socialisation processes. Nonetheless, the participants generally agree that 'violence' is a broader term than 'bullying', and that 'bullying' involves an imbalance of power between perpetrators and victims (Olweus, 1999), intent to harm or intimidate (Coy, 2001; Pepler & Craig, 1994), and usually a pattern of repeated aggression or aggressive exclusion (physical, verbal, and/or relational) over time (Zambeta et al., 2016; see also Randall, 1991; Stephenson and Smith; 1991).

3.2.3. Reasons for violence

This section presents the findings of the focus group interviews held in Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland and Romania concerning the factors at play, when it comes to school violence. Family-related issues, institutional components of school operation, insufficient communication among parents, teachers and students, school-size, scarcity of resources related to inclusive structures in order to enhance good practices of managing 'difference' (relating mainly to Roma populations) are mentioned as reasons for violence. Those findings

are in line with the bulk of the international scholarly work on school violence (Rigby, 2002; Curtner-Smith, 2000; Harber, 2002; Stoudt, 2006), but regional variations still remain important and deserve further study.

Family

In the majority of the national reports, issues related to forms of family organisation and function are highlighted as structural factors in the perpetration of violence (Vujović, 2016, p. 3 & 5; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016 p. 6; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 10 & 11; Rafalska & Styslavska 2016 p. 4), along with disadvantaged students' backgrounds (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 11). The family is associated with students' victimisation and/ or the perpetration of violence in the relevant literature. This is in terms of the organisation of the family, the mode of communication among its members, upbringing practices, permissive or restrictive parenting style and parental supervision (Curtner-Smith, 2000; Rigby, 2002; Christenson, Anderson & Hirsch, 2004). Immigration of parents, loose family bonds and lack of mutually accepted rules (see also Carney & Merrell, 2001), as well as the use of violence by parents as a rearing practice (see also Shields & Cicchetti, 2001) are perceived by the participants as reasons for violence (Vujović, 2016, p. 5; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016 p. 4; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 10 & 11). Subsequent tension created within the family as a repressive institution *per se*, may be responsible for students' tension that is eventually released at school (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 9):

(…) the negative examples come exactly from families who do not take care about their children.

(Parents Representative, Montenegro, p. 5)

Children strictly educated at home, escape at school; their violent parents punish them frequently and this results into a state that is released at school.

(School Principal, Romania, p. 9)

3.2.3.1. School structure-related reasons for violence

Institutional and pedagogical violence

In Greece and Poland, many of the participants in the focus group interviews argued that violence is related to the structural characteristics of the education system.

Such characteristics may be associated with the evaluation of students (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016 p. 12; Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 15 & 16; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p. 5), or the curriculum (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 12; Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 16; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p. 9):

(...) the grading system is a form of psychological violence.

(Parent 1, Greece, p. 17)

There are a lot of subjects, teachers must do everything in the curriculum, children do not have spare time anymore... they don't have time to relax ... it is normal to accumulate tension.

(Parent, Romania, p. 12)

Participants often claim that the curriculum itself leaves no space for the management of violence. In other words, the rigidity and density of the curriculum is often associated with tension and haste. Tension is likely to disrupt teachers' efforts to preserve discipline and ensure security inside and outside of the classroom and it is connected to the hectic rhythms of school life (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 18; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 12; Vujović, 2016, p. 6).

There is certain haste at school. I am not sure if I would call it 'violence' or not, I would call it 'non-thinking'. (…) There is a routine, in a way, in the schools where violence is manifested.

(Teacher 1, Greece, p. 18)

(…) you are pressed to preserve safety, discipline, to protect a child from being injured. From then on, it is easy for someone - me let me talk about me - to exceed certain limits that we know aren't right. There is tension, in general. And this tension exists in the schoolyard, it is everywhere.

(Teacher, Greece, p. 18)

The bureaucratic operation of schools and the centralised control of both school time and regulations regarding discipline (the timetable, the curriculum which defines distinct roles of the school actors etc.), is therefore described as a potential generator of violence. The school is thus portrayed as a version of an austere institution (Foucault, 1977), whose role to establish predictable behaviours in all its members through discipline, alienates the school actors from their actions and strips them of control over school time (Goffman, 1961), something that is perceived as encouraging violence.

Lastly, according to some participants, disciplinary violence is the most common form of violence that students suffer in school, as it is used by teachers as punishment (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 17; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 11).

> There are potentially violent adults working in education. It is not a secret that there is (in the school) an old teacher who is now retired but he still teaches; he pulls children by their ears... I froze, I could not believe it... but he refused to admit he uses such a pedagogical model.
>
> (School Principal, Romania, p. 11)

For some other participants, however, discipline does not necessarily mean violence. According to their view, the school has to teach children to respect the rules under which the team operates.

> I think that there is no violence against students exercised by teachers. It is a different thing, another kind of pressure, the pressure to complete your lesson, the discipline.
>
> (Parent 1, Greece, p. 17-18)

Lack of communication

Lack of communication in school was also mentioned as a reason for violence. Communication seems to be critical between teachers and students (Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p. 6), as well as between teachers and parents in the school context (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 21), as its absence may induce violence.

> It is also a fact that we, teachers induce aggression among students. By (...) relations.
>
> (Teacher, Poland, p. 6)

> Closed doors to parents. At school. It is a settled practice, policy of many schools in order to survive. This is violence.
>
> (Activist group 2, Greece, p. 21)

Notably, as reported in Greece, teacher-parent cooperation in school seems to be somehow problematic. Teachers vividly state that the lack of cooperation is mainly due to parents' exclusion from the school community, which is the case in Montenegro's focus group interviews:

> We do not have parents as partners in the conversation.
>
> (Subject Teacher, Montenegro, p. 7)

School size and management

Furthermore, the large student population along with school's infrastructure create obstacles in managing violence in schools (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 21; Vujović, 2016, p. 5; see also Harber, 2002):

> (…) at the school in which I used to be, with 180 children, I used to know each parent's name (…) I knew the company of each child. (…) It can't be all so impersonal. It can't be 'Hello' and you at 'Hello' not knowing whom you are facing. (…) These schools, that is, the enormous, you can't say that you will manage violence.
>
> (School principal, Greece, p. 21)

Managing difference

Teachers framed their ineffectiveness in managing difference, as an issue that is closely affiliated with violence. Nevertheless, they also emphasised their critical role in potentially bringing positive change in diversity-related questions (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 20).

> Well, Roma children come with this physical contact very cultivated, we don't manage as we should (…) but we end up having consolidated an attitude towards them, having isolated these children and not being able to manage all this; we don't work it all the time.
>
> (Activist group 2, Greece, p. 20)

> (…) they mocked the child because he is black. At some point, for instance, at school and when the parent came to see what had happened, because many times the fight became physical, anyway, the teacher would realise that 'oh, I haven't talked to the children about this issue, as it seems'.
>
> (Activist group 1, Greece, p. 20)

The presence of minority group students in schools calls for a more drastic response on the part of teachers, who are considered to be responsible for managing cultural differences and promoting equality. This task is somewhat difficult, since they are called on to address both overt and subtle racism and discrimination, as well as their institutionalised forms (see Rostas & Kostka, 2014; Peguero, 2011; Horvai, 2010).

Lack of inclusive practices

▬▬ School was described as inefficient in taking into account the different starting points of students, and thus responsible for contributing to the reproduction of social hierarchies, a fact that is perceived as encouraging violent practices. Official knowledge (Apple, 2000 [1993]), reflected in and shaped by the national curricula, education policies, tests, textbooks and so on, usually fails to meet all students' real educational needs and thus perpetuates social inequalities in schools.

> How do you step on the child's experience - I mean in the first grade - to teach it to read. (…) All these things are not worked in our education system. They are not included in our curricula, therefore all this hierarchy reveals itself at school (…) That is, all these things are so hard to be worked. Identities are hierarchised, whether we like it or not.
>
> (School principal 1, Greece, p. 19)

▬▬ For example, participants regretted the insufficient compensatory structures in the cases of students with disabilities (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 19). Since in general schools are constructed, in terms of infrastructure, teaching materials and goals, to address non-disabled students, the existence of students with disabilities disrupts their 'normal' operation and raises the issue of students' segregation into special classes.

> (...) and exclusion of children that we can include in the broader spectrum of learning disabilities (…) I believe that a great inequality is manifested in the classrooms. That is, a child with autism attends the regular class, let's say, with echolalia, you can't do your lesson. This annoys children, it also annoys the teacher when he himself can't work, it reaches parents; parents come outraged at school.
>
> (School principal 1, Greece, p. 19)

▬▬ Some school actors understand segregation as an inclusive practice, because it might help avoid conflicts between parents and the school, and the subsequent isolation of the students with disabilities. However, some scholars question segregation practices and place emphasis on the socially and institutionally constructed category of disability (Watts & Erevelles, 2004). It is argued that sorting out students is a violent practice *per se*, since it constructs some students as *deviants* and contributes to a dangerous and oppressive normalisation process (ibid).

Society-related reasons for violence

▬▬ Lastly, society-related reasons, such as economic crisis (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 8; Vujović, 2016, p. 6), the influence of social environment (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 12; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 7), the influence of media (Vujović, 2016, p. 4; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 12; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p. 5; see also Meeks Gardner et al., 2003) were also mentioned.

3.2.4. Forms and subjects of violence

▬▬ Even though, there is not a clear and unanimous definition of school violence in the participants' answers (see also Henry, 2000), concrete forms and modes of expression of violence, as well as specific subjects among which violence is expressed at schools can be identified. Regarding the subjects of violence, it can be argued that the participants refer to school violence or bullying as an individual or collective act (see also Rigby, 2002, p. 43-49), which takes place inside and outside schools and it is expressed mostly among students, but also among teachers and students, among students and teachers (students' aggressiveness towards teachers; see also Espelage et al., 2013), among parents and teachers, and parents and students (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016). In addition, some information providers from Romania report incidents of violence by students against animals (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016). Violence against animals, when accepted, is alluding to taxonomies of beings and could extend to justify violation of human rights (McMahan, 2005).

Peer violence (student to student)

▬▬ The participants' answers demonstrate that violence among peers at school presents different characteristics and takes many forms, such as verbal violence (insulting and name-calling, threatening to cause fear, verbal aggression, and consequent intimidation), non-verbal violence and physical violence (aggressiveness with acts), psychological violence (displays of favouritism or scapegoating, taking out anger, hurtfulness), social exclusion and isolation (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, see also Benbenishty & Astor, 2005, p. 25- 41), and "visual harassment", a recently spreading form of violence that occurs through sexual content or rape-scenes being circulated on smart phones (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016).

(…) using bad language, shouting, verbal abuse (…) the next step can be physical; hitting, beating, being assaulted by a group, also taking personal belongings from a peer, or excluding someone from the community.

(French & History teacher, Hungary, p. 4)

■■■ In Montenegro, although the participants of both focus groups mention various examples of physical violence they are familiar with, ranging from a boy who imitates cartoon heroes, picks up tree branches and rushes after the other children, to sexual harassment of an ailing boy by a peer group, they conclude that verbal violence (taunts, insults, rejection, threats) is more common than physical violence (Vujović, 2016). According to them, some new and less visible forms of violence are on the rise. Particularly, there is an increase in violence through social networks; a form of violence that is difficult to detect and prevent. Moreover, there is an increase in violence amongst girls who form groups according to different "status symbols" (ibid).

In the first grade of primary school the psychological and the verbal violence is already visible, often it is unconscious behaviour learnt at home.

(Primary school classroom teacher, Montenegro, p. 1)

■■■ In Romania, as well, the most common form of violence among students is verbal violence; however, many cases of physical violence are also reported. The participants in Romania declare that for many students violence seems to be normal and most of the time it comes as a spontaneous reaction to anger and frustration (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016). In Hungary, according to the participants, there is a special form of violence, which has to do with the initiation of rituals or "rites of passage" that include humiliation or physical abuse (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016).

Violence expressed by teachers – Pedagogical and institutional violence

■■■ According to some participants, the most common form of violence that students suffer in school, is the disciplinary violence used by teachers as punishment (see the section of this chapter *Institutional and pedagogical violence*, p. 10-11; see also Saltmarsh, Robinson & Davies, 2012).

■■■ In addition, Greek participants testify that teachers might be violent towards students in the form of sending them out of class as punishment, of being ironic or even of gripping and shaking students when someone's safety is at stake (Zambeta et al., 2016). It is reported that these practices continue despite the literal prohibition of corporal punishment by law (ibid).

■■■ Although the pedagogical and institutional form of violence is not reported very clearly by all of the participants, it is undoubtedly apparent in some countries. In Romania, for example, the participants report incidents of planned aggression, which are premeditated by teachers as a warning or as punishment to students for unacceptable behaviour (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016).

Seminar held in Sinaia, Romania, 9-11 March 2016

Parental aggressive involvement (parent-teacher / parent-student)

▬▬ In this pilot project, parents are presented as potential agents of violence. In the opinion of some Greek participants, parents, as well as exercising violence towards teachers, often use incidents of violence towards their children as an excuse to interfere in the operation of the school, and to control not only the management of the phenomena of violence, but also teachers' and school work (Zambeta et al., 2016). In Romania too, parents "take justice into their own hands" because they presume that teachers' efforts are inefficient (Olweus, 1997) and express violence towards teachers but also towards students who have assaulted their children at school, thus interfering in the operation of the school (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016).

> I have worked in three different schools so far, and in all of them I have met parents who have abused students. (…) a mother who pulled a girl's hair. She took justice in her hands (…).
>
> (Teacher, Romania, p. 4)

▬▬ Parental involvement is an extensively studied issue, in which social class and culture intersect and in turn influence the forms of parental attendance in school life (Lareau, 2000; Buttler & van Zanten, 2007). Sometimes, though, parental involvement is perceived by teachers as undermining their professional identity (Zambeta et al., 2007).

3.2.5. Settings / places / occasions where violence takes place

▬▬ As reported in all the countries, violence takes place both on and off school premises (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016). Specifically, violent incidents often occur in the classroom, but also in the public areas of schools such as school playgrounds, corridors, stairs and washrooms (see also Bickmore, 2011; Astor & Meyer, 2001). These incidents occur mostly during the breaks, but very often before or after school, on the road to/from school, at the bus station, on the bus, in the students' neighbourhood, and in places where they hang out (see also Rigby, 2002, p. 195-199). In addition, according to the participants of the focus groups in Montenegro, violence often occurs on school trips and excursions (Vujović, 2016).

> (…) washrooms, corridors and the school playground are the places where violence takes place (...) on the school bus (...) and there [on the bus], our intervention is not very easy because you don't have any jurisdiction. It is the driver, the co-driver [who is responsible] (...) There are complaints from the neighbourhood and from the places where children hang out, sometimes people come from the nearby supermarket and say to me that students did this or that or quarrelled among themselves while shopping (...) Many, however, incidents occur during the break (...) because during the break students from different classes, different ages coexist (...)
>
> (School principal 1, Greece, p. 14)

▬▬ Moreover, cyberspace is an increasingly prominent arena for violence (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016; see also Keith & Martin, 2005). In Hungary for example, the participants reckoned that cyber-violence is very intense and difficult to manage because very often the victims of aggressive acts tend to consider the violent incidents a joke, even though they are seriously hurt (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016).

3.3. Major variables of school violence

▬▬ This section focuses on the determinants of school violence in terms of analytical categories such as gender, national origin, ethnicity and disability.

3.3.1. Gender

▬▬ Schools are sites where institutional definitions of gender are (re)produced (Connell, 1996). Moreover, they function as key sites where identities are constructed as predominantly heterosexual (Epstein, 1997; Renold, 2000). In this context, violence is a means of establishing normative gender definitions among peers (Connell, 1996).

▬▬ In the majority of focus groups, gender was mentioned in terms of masculinity and femininity. Furthermore, masculinity and femininity were emphatically linked to homosociality, that is to gendered practices and social bonds developed among peers of same-sex groups (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014)

> (…) Somehow they are socialised in one way or another by gender - boys must prove their masculinity and they can only do it against each other ... (…)
>
> (NGO, Romania, p. 8)

▰▰ According to participants' views, violence has been intertwined with masculinity and homosociality, which means that violence is a means for granting someone's conformity to masculinity in same-sex groups (Zambeta et al., 2016 p. 23; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016 p. 5; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016 p. 8; see also Connell 1996; Stoudt, 2006).

▰▰ Unlike masculinity, femininity was rarely mentioned during the focus group's discussions. It seems that violence among girls is linked to status-symbols and (feminine) consumerist practices.

> (…) For example, it often happens that girls form groups according to some external status symbols (appearance, clothing, money…) and they exert pressure and reject others who do "not fit" their standards.
>
> (Primary School Pedagogue, Montenegro, p. 6)

▰▰ According to Skeggs (2004), appearance is an indicator of social hierarchies in which adornment related to lower socio-economic groups is negatively valued. Moreover, taking into account that consumerist practices are gendered (Bristor & Fischer, 1993), the capacity to consume girls' accessories, usually indicative of social hierarchies, seems to affect the feminine version of violence (Vujović, 2016, p. 6).

▰▰ Gender norms may differ according to the socio-economic, national or ethnic background and they may also depend on specific conditions, such as the economic crisis, for instance. Conformity with appropriate gender norms might ignite violent incidents, when masculinity or femininity is at stake (Zambeta et al 2016, p. 22).

> Namely, when a little boy for some reason – because in a patriarchal system it is offensive being called a 'girl'- if something like this happens in a repeated manner or in some other ways, with more… heavy words, then this child will have a rather hard time telling his parents.
>
> (Activist Group 2, Greece, p. 22)

▰▰ When conformity to hegemonic performance of masculinity is at risk, boys seem to discipline their peers' performances by exerting violence (Stoudt, 2006).

▰▰ Moreover, although homophobia was mentioned in the cases of Greece, Hungary and Montenegro (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 23; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 7; Vujović, 2016, p. 4), it did not emerge in Polish and Romanian focus groups (Rafalska & Styslavska 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016). Since homophobia is associated with conformity to commonly accepted gender-norms, this issue needs to be studied further.

Focus group, Athens, Greece, 20th January 2016

3.3.2. National origin and ethnicity

▰▰ Violence due to national origin or ethnicity is embedded in children's negotiations of their social positioning affected by wider societal discourses of sameness and difference (Devine, Kenny & Macneela, 2008). Participants reported violence due to national and/or ethnic background in schools mainly by mentioning the victimisation of Roma and second generation students (Zambeta et al., 2016; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016).

▰▰ With regard to Roma students, research emphasises that education systems across Europe are sites of pervasive inequalities and segregation (Horvai, 2010; Rostas & Kostka, 2014). Likewise, the majority of participants testify that Roma students are physically victimised, socially isolated or even excluded by both teachers and students (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 24 & 25; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016 p. 7; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 7; see also Kende, 2007; Devine, Kenny & Macneela 2008; Foster & Norton, 2012).

(…) Roma children. Excessively. Since I'm in an all-day school and entering different classrooms, and filling working hours in, it's really amazing how in an innovative school, an ANT.AR.SY.A. [extreme leftist political party in Greece] school and even more leftist ones, Roma children are isolated.

(Activist Group 2, Greece, p. 24)

When classes ended, in the evening, some (seventh grade) girls stopped her [a Roma girl] at the school gate and beat her …

(Parent, Romania, p. 7)

▬▬ However, even if potential violence against Roma or second generation students is being admitted, it is not always recognised as central in the school context, as underlined in the case of Montenegrin focus groups (Vujović, 2016, p. 5).

It happens sometimes (e.g. the children teased a girl whose mother was Albanian, sometimes Roma children), but it is not the dominant cause of the violence.

(Primary School Pedagogue, Montenegro, p. 5)

▬▬ Violence against second generation students was also mentioned during the focus groups interviews in Greece (Zambeta et al 2016, p. 24):

(…) Let's say that in the past there were such [violent] incidents with regard to foreign children. In the beginning at least [of her career in the primary school mentioned], when I first came to the school, where the number of students was great, there were tendencies of exclusion. There was a dominant [racist] discourse, like, by Greeks towards Albanian children. I notice this because we had children here that were mainly Albanians and fewer from other [national] groups. I saw this too.

(School Principal 1, Greece, p. 24)

▬▬ Although research supports the fact that exclusion due to national origin is less common in comparison with other forms of violence in schools (Smith & Shu, 2000; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002) participants in Greece stated otherwise. For them, violence is more evident in exclusionary practices against second generation students; moreover, in primary school this kind of violence was more evident in the past compared to the present. Nevertheless, violence is not absent; participants also stated that incidents of violence are more visible in secondary education.

▬▬ With regard to the aforementioned, there was no differentiation between primary and secondary education in most reports, with the exception of Greece, where such incidents take place less frequently in the primary than the secondary level of education:

From all incidents, that are half in primary schools and half in secondary schools, I have only encountered racist incidents from a teacher towards a student in secondary education. Calling him 'Albanian' in the classroom and the like. In secondary school, this is a personal experience.

(Activist Group 2, Greece, p. 24)

3.3.3. Disabilities

▬▬ Disabilities emerge as a variable of violence in most reports (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 26; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p. 6; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 7). Research has shown how disabled and non-disabled identities are discursively constructed and performed in schools (Holt, 2004).

▬▬ Noticeably, students with disabilities are described as both victims (see also Norwich & Kelly 2004; Little 2002) and perpetrators (see also Kaukiainen et al., 2002; Kuhne & Wiener 2000; Whitney et al 1994). Teachers may not be able to cope with violence and they suggest that students with communication-related disorders are susceptible to become violent (Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p. 5).

▬▬ When it comes to victimisation of students with (various forms of) disabilities, there seems to be a differentiation regarding the intensity and the patterns of violence, since parents may also exert violence on them. For instance, when participants refer to violence against students with learning disabilities, calling names comes up as a recurring form of violence (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 27):

And something rather important in what (Teacher 1's name) said, is that we noticed a lot of incidents of violence by the majority of the class towards children with learning difficulties, he was the fool, the moron etc.

(School Principal, Greece, p. 27)

▬▬ By calling names, such as fool or moron, children regulate their peers' performance in class and set clear-cut boundaries of acceptance. Therefore, children with learning disabilities are constructed as "Others" due to lack of conformity to classroom's expectations of mind-body differences (Holt, 2004).

3.3.4. Social class – social inequality

▬▬ According to Rigby (2004), there is no reliable connection between violence in schools and social inequalities. Notwithstanding, there are divergences in so far as some researchers do support their potential correlation (O'Moore, Kirkham & Smith, 1997; Herr & Anderson, 2003), while others advocate against it (Rigby, 2004) or find very little association (Wolke et al., 2001; Due et al., 2009).

▬▬ In general, participants associate social inequalities with various differing patterns of violence (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 26; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p. 26; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 11; Vujović, 2016, p. 3). However, perpetration and victimisation related to the socio-economic background of students are differentiated between countries. In this context, subjects of perpetration and victimisation are both mentioned as belonging to the most deprived and to the most privileged social groups. Specifically, in reports from Greece and Montenegro, students from higher socio-economic groups are more frequently described as perpetrators (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 26; Vujović, 2016, p. 3).

> (…) The group of thugs was joined by the children who never showed signs of inappropriate behaviour ("all the good students, from good families")
>
> (Subject Teacher, Montenegro p. 3)

▬▬ In Hungary and Poland, on the other hand, participants profile students from deprived backgrounds as perpetrators (Enyedi & Lázár 2016, p. 11, Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p. 11).

▬▬ However, participants do not only associate subjects of perpetration and victimisation with social background, but they also recognise and correlate social class with violence. To this end, symbolic violence, which is connected to the ways dominant groups use cultural capital and succeed in consolidating it as the dominant social norm through social institutions, such as school, is critical (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Participants report symbolic violence among different socio-economic strata, in the form of isolation, but they do not mention it in the context of social hierarchies in school settings, since it is not often perceived as such:

> There is great isolation, there is substantial hierarchy, identities are ranked and the issue of social division, even though no one talks about it, is present.
>
> (School Principal, Greece, p. 26)

▬▬ In the majority of countries, forms of violence are not related to socio-economic background, with the exception of Greece, where physical violence is reported as being perpetrated by the lowest socio-economic groups and non-physical (exclusion, threats) by the most privileged ones.

> Physical violence in lower ones [socio-economic strata] and isolation and, 'I don't invite you', 'I won't talk to you', 'I'm ignoring you', 'I'm meddling with your stuff', and so on, in upper ones.
>
> (Activist Group 2, Greece p. 26)

3.3.5. Main characteristics of perpetrators and victims

▬▬ In general, traits attributed to perpetrators and victims are used inter changeably. Therefore, participants of the focus groups describe victims and perpetrators in similar ways, meaning thereby that there are no discernible (personality) traits, which differentiate victims and perpetrators, so that roles may be interchangeable (Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p.10; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 5). When referring to perpetration and victimisation, special emphasis is placed on students and less on teachers or parents. Therefore, in the main students are portrayed as perpetrators and victims (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Sandru, 2016). Nevertheless, in some cases perpetration and victimisation are illustrated with regard to teacher-student violence (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 11; Vujović, 2016, p. 2; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 11) and parent-student and parent-teacher (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 11 & 27; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 10).

Main characteristics of perpetrators

▬▬ Perpetrators are portrayed with an emphasis on psychological terms (Ringrose & Renold, 2010), such as being full of tension (Enyedi & Lázár 2016, p. 6),

> (…) that it is surprising that they are only stressed as much as they are, because there is no valve to let off steam, tension is building up inside them, and it looks as if we adults close off these valves at times.
>
> (Mediator, Hungary, p. 6)

> …vulnerable, insecure, group dependent and sometimes coerced into perpetration by peers (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016 p. 9; Vujović, 2016, p. 3 & 5; Rose et al., 2010),

(…) he would follow the group anywhere...

(Teacher, Romania, p. 9)

(…) the children are often under pressure to be actors in a group, 'the principle applied is - if you're not with us, you are the next victim.'

(Subject Teacher, Montenegro, p. 3)

(…) impulsive, unable to restrain themselves

(Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 9).

(…) a girl hears from another girl that a third girl had called her names; she does not check the information and confronts the girl who had allegedly called her names and assaults her.

(Psychological Counsellor, Romania, p. 9)

(…)Perpetrators may also be victims, who return their continuous victimisation (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 9).

(…) he seemed withdrawn, quiet, a good child, but I found out that he was humiliated by his classmates … he could not impose himself on the others. And the child who seemed to stand very quietly, actually suffered, deep down inside; he kept suffering and once he broke out and hit a colleague who mocked him, perhaps not more than others but at that moment he could not bear it any more, it was the straw that broke the camel's back ...

(Teacher, Romania, p. 9)

▰▰▰ Thus, they mention the need to focus on perpetrators' needs and to provide support (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 28), as one participant in Greece stated:

And many times, I agree with (Teacher 1's name), this perpetrator has, this child has a greater need of support, since sometimes you see in familial environment things that you don't like.

(School Principal 1, Greece, p. 28)

▰▰▰ Apart from psychological characteristics, participants attributed physical ones to the perpetrators, e.g. physical strength (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 5; see also Ma, 2001). Poor or high school achievement is also associated with perpetration (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 28; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 10; Vujović, 2016, p. 3; see also Rose et al., 2010):

(…) and is a good student and in a cunning way, they are manipulative, he talks to you and you don't easily grasp what's happening and he takes satisfaction.

(School adviser, Greece, p. 28)

Main characteristics of victims

▰▰▰ Victims' psychological traits are portrayed in terms of passivity (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 29; Vujović, 2016, p. 5) and low self-esteem (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 29; Rose et al., 2010):

I believe that [victims] are mostly those kinds of people that do not easily react, who are less, have a more low-key profile (…). Among children those who are mainly victimised are lower, with lower self-esteem (…)

(Teacher 2, Greece, p. 29)

▰▰▰ In terms of peer interaction, participants reported that victims are often unpopular among peers (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 29; Rose et al., 2010)

They are not the popular ones.

(Activist Group 1, Greece, p. 29)

▰▰▰ and may be excluded from peer groups (Zambeta et al., 2016 p. 29; Rose et al., 2010). Victimisation may result in isolation, since it is often concealed from school or family members (Zambeta et al., 2016 p. 29; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 4; Vujović, 2016, p. 6; Roberts & Coursol, 1996).

The victims are afraid to seek our help because they think that it would make them even more exposed to violence.

(Primary School Subject Teacher, Montenegro, p. 6)

▰▰▰ Obesity and lack of conformity with fashion trends are also mentioned as body-image related characteristics of victims (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 29; Vujović, 2016, p. 3 & 5; see also Griffiths et al., 2006; Francombe-Webb & Silk, 2015).

3.4. Means for combatting violence and recommendations

▬▬ The importance of preventative actions was stressed in all national focus groups. There was a general agreement that emphasis should be placed on measures aimed at managing the factors which generate or enable violence, rather than on violent incidents themselves.

> If the framework which makes it possible to maintain a preventive atmosphere in a school is continuously monitored, developed and implemented, there is a real chance for combatting violence.
>
> (French & History teacher, Hungary, p. 11)

▬▬ The recommendations in some countries reveal two conflicting discourses, which even so co-exist in the same national context: a tendency to promote dialogue among stakeholders and a tendency to enforce restrictive measures, such as stricter rules and surveillance mechanisms, a finding which also emerged in the comparative policy review. Notably, despite the frequent adoption of individualistic conceptualisations of violence, the recommendations made by the participants are not restricted to in-school measures, but permeate education policy and local society stakeholders. We could argue that by considering wider society as a tank of resources regarding school violence prevention, the participants highlight the school as embedded within society, and violence as a social phenomenon.

3.4.1. (Whole) community approach – networking

Focus group, Budapest, Hungary, 18th January 2016

▬▬ The participants of the focus groups highlighted the need for cooperation among the different stakeholders. The suggestions revolve around opening the school to the community, through partnerships with various bodies. Interestingly, this finding emerged to different extents in all national focus groups analyses.

▬▬ The necessity for discussion among and joint action from school principals, teachers, students and parents was a common finding in all countries' focus groups. The participants claim that parents need to be encouraged to actively participate in school life and cooperate with teachers in order to combat violence.

> Schools need support of the system and the institutions outside the school need to deal with the family. Better collaboration with parents.
>
> (MUP – Regional Unit Bar- crime department head, Montenegro, p. 8)

▬▬ There was a tendency to involve stakeholders from the wider community, which was exceptionally evident in Greece and Romania (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016). Apart from cooperation among teachers, students and parents, many participants claimed that there is a need for schools to be opened to the local community. They referred to 'networking' as a practice, which will empower school professionals in their efforts to deal with violence (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 30). In fact, in Hungary, the focus group interview itself served as a paradigm of networking and inspired the participants for its continuation: '*One of the immediate*

outcomes of the Focus Group Interview was the subsequent networking which could be experienced between the participants.' (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 14). This opening up of the school would entail partnerships with municipalities, social services, university departments, local activist groups, NGOs, companies, other schools and local museums. It was maintained that collaboration with the aforementioned groups would strengthen the competences of schools to combat violence. In the Polish focus group interview, the participants reported that one of the efficient routes of support already available is cooperation with the social welfare centre (Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p. 8).

> We cooperated with the social welfare centre.
>
> (School pedagogue, Poland, p. 8)
>
> It [the network] can include universities; it can include programmes and political movements. Whichever network is active in a region, I mean there may be a network in [inner-city area] which is related to the citizens who have been mobilised for that park. They, too, have started to coil; they conduct educational activities and they add in the middle local museums.
>
> (Activist group 2, Greece, p. 31-32)
>
> The solution is a systematic work, coordinated action of the whole society, there is no connectivity.
>
> (Primary school pedagogue, Montenegro, p. 8)
>
> Collaboration with various foundations, companies or NGOs is important for school, it completes non-formal education.
>
> (Parent, Romania, School No. 64)

▬ Collaboration with the police was another option that came up in some focus groups. Some participants in Montenegro, Poland and Romania mentioned having cooperated with the police in order to deal with violent incidents involving students, (Vujović, 2016) having invited the police to implement preventive and raising awareness programmes (Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016) or just considering the involvement of the police as a possible option in the process of dealing with violent incidents (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016). Nonetheless in Hungary it was reported that notifying the police had not been necessary so far (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 7). It seems that in these countries, school stakeholders view the police as members of the community, who could constitute a potential ally in violence management and prevention.

> We support the idea of teamwork, collaboration between classmasters, principals, parents, and police.
>
> (School principal, Romania, p. 14)

3.4.2. School policy of prevention

▬ Preparing an action plan beforehand was presented as vital for the effectiveness of addressing violence issues. The participants admitted that clear school rules communicated to teachers, students and parents at the beginning of the school year constitute an important tool for the prevention of violence (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 32-33). Some participants in Hungary, Poland and Romania emphasised the importance of the participation of students in the process of defining rules and of the way rules are communicated to students (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016).

> So, I want to say this, from experience. In schools which discuss the issue of school violence at the first meeting, at the beginning of the school year - and discuss it, but not ritualistically, because it [the Ministry's directive] says they should - but more in detail, and make an action plan for addressing school violence, I believe, or want to believe, that problems aren't so intense.
>
> (School adviser, Greece, p. 33)

▬ Agreement upon and abidance by the rules would ideally prevent violence, yet ensuring discipline remains a rather thorny and challenging issue within school policy. In all the countries, it was reported that the disciplinary methods in place are sometimes inefficient or inappropriate. In Hungary, the participants suggested that punishment oriented disciplinary methods should be replaced by alternative methods, which would be developed with the participation of students (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 10).

▬ Sometimes, though, the participants suggested that the rules needed to become stricter and the penalties for misbehaving students should extend to expulsions from school activities or from the school itself (Vujović, 2016).

> Children who behave inappropriately should be excluded from school – so that they would not adversely affect the other children.
>
> (High school teacher, Montenegro, p. 8)

■■■ In any case, the participants in Hungary, Montenegro and Romania emphasised that a positive school climate, where students feel confident to express their feelings, seek the support of the school staff when they need it and derive pleasure from their school attendance is a key element in violence prevention (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016). To achieve this, it was stressed that communication among stakeholders should be encouraged, so that a trusting relationship based on dialogue can be developed between them.

■■■ Other suggestions regarding prevention strategies in schools include equipping students with competences which will render them capable of protecting themselves, respecting their own and their peers' bodies, expressing their emotions and developing empathy (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016). Specifically, the participants in Hungary enumerated a series of techniques that students should be taught to use in order to acquire social skills, skills in empathy, a sense of fair play, self-control and self-regulation.

> They are required to demonstrate skills in being empathetic and to recognise what their partners feel and what they themselves feel. The question is whether they can identify their own feelings and how much teachers can help them in that.
>
> (Professional mediator, Hungary, p. 10)

■■■ Furthermore, some participants argued that students should be given alternative constructive behaviours when they need to 'release tension'. Engaging in physical activities and using humour were two specific examples that were mentioned (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 11 & 12).

> Physical activities are usually helpful, or tearing up a piece of paper and throwing something into the bin.
>
> (Teacher, Hungary, p. 11)

■■■ The Hungarian participants also stressed that the involvement of students in creative and constructive activities is a process which would prevent violence, giving them the opportunity to cooperate with each other and feel the challenge of trying new attractive educational processes (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016, p. 12). For example, volunteer work in school and being part of a peer-help group were mentioned as activities which would bring great potential in recreating school life.

> In many cases such a community can work as therapeutic group as a member who has been marginalised gets opened up here.
>
> (Secondary grammar school teacher, Hungary, p. 12)

■■■ In some countries, the participants reported that restrictive measures and the increase of surveillance in schools may constitute potentially effective measures against violence. In Montenegro, they mentioned that establishing a network of video surveillance would help manage violence (Vujović, 2016).

> Video surveillance should be set up in every school. Social networks should be controlled.
>
> (Parent, Montenegro, p. 8)

■■■ Control over social networks (Vujović, 2016, p. 8; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p. 7) and the media, so that they provide violence-free shows (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 14), were other suggestions made by the participants. Moreover, bringing back school uniforms in schools in order to disguise differences among students was a suggestion, which also came up in Montenegro (Vujović, 2016).

> Introduce school uniforms.
>
> (Subject teacher, Montenegro, p. 8)

■■■ On the other hand, the participants in Greece reported that they resist the attempts of the *Observatory for the Prevention of School Violence and Bullying* to monitor violence in schools, because they are worried about and opposed to the proliferation of surveillance institutions (Zambeta et al., 2016).

> (...) we all are discussing now, talking about an opening that the school must make in order to accomplish inclusion (…) and all this system [Observatory] –stemming from the Ministry - comes to (…) entrench and close the issue.
>
> (School principal 1, Greece, p. 35)

3.4.3. Counselling

■■■ The need for counselling processes emerged in all national focus groups, mainly in the form of professional psychological support to teachers, parents and students. In the context of the community, counselling services seem to strengthen the participants' bonds and improve communication among stakeholders, so that cooperation and joint action among them are ensured. The participants in all the focus groups argued that schools are in need of permanent and close cooperation with school psychologists, who will help improve

communication among teachers, parents and students. Few participants stated that psychologists had been very helpful when dealing with violence in the past. In Poland and Romania, even though professional psychological support is available in schools, the participants reported that it is not sufficient, since not enough time is allocated to counselling considering the number of students (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 15; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016, p. 9).

> It's important to involve psychologists to work on a relief, on children's adjustment to school requirements and to work on valuing all students and on conflict management.
>
> (Teacher, Romania, p. 15)

▬▬ Developing peer mediation processes was a suggestion that actively involves students in conflict resolution (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016, p. 14).

> Peer counselling, students to be mediators and partners with teachers, to participate in promoting stop violence messages.
>
> (NGO representative, Romania, p. 16)

▬▬ Parental counselling schools were suggested as a supportive structure which will help schools combat violence (Enyedi &Lázár, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016). Parents who attend counselling schools were referred to as more likely to respond to the attempts by schools to jointly address the issue of violence. Some participants argued that schools face severe difficulties in resolving issues when violence is used as a means of communication within the family, when parents tend to deny their children's inappropriate behaviour by minimising it or when they do not show up in school despite being requested to (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016). According to some participants, parents need tools to understand and identify violence, as well as skills to effectively communicate with their children.

> Educating parents to act in line with the school, to create Parents' School, to learn to communicate with the parent, to reach their children's real needs.
>
> (Parent, Romania, p. 16)

3.4.4. Teachers' awareness, autonomy, professionalism

▬▬ The participants reported that teachers are in the position to undertake significant action, as far as the prevention of violence is concerned.

> Teachers can do a lot. We have power; we can do a lot in this field.
>
> (Teacher, Poland, p. 12)

▬▬ Teachers' commitment to their work, professional autonomy and trust in their skills emerged as important components of any prevention policy. The participants supported the idea that teachers who are confident with their professional skills, satisfied with their work environment and who feel that their efforts are being acknowledged, tend to manage violence more effectively. Keeping informed on pedagogical methods, taking initiatives and organising extra-curricular activities and projects, were mentioned as strategies which should be followed by teachers in order to prevent and manage violence (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016). Specifically, some teachers mentioned that they need regular pedagogical sessions during which they can discuss their concerns and ideas, and have a chance to collectively reflect on their teaching practices (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 34).

> I want us to conduct a pedagogical session in order to listen to some suggestions myself, why should I implement mine [ideas] all the time, the ones I have thought of. We never do [pedagogical sessions].
>
> (Activist group 2, Greece, p. 34)

▬▬ In Montenegro and Poland the participants argued that teachers should work on establishing their authority and reputation. It was maintained that not all teachers are respected by students and parents; and those who are not, have more difficulty in managing violence (Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016). The lack of teachers' authority was also related to a school's ineffectual authority as an institution, by the participants (Vujović, 2016, p. 8).

> Restore the dignity of teachers and school.
>
> (High school principal, Montenegro, p. 8)

> We often forget that our authority is not granted just because we are teachers; we need to work hard for it.
>
> (Teacher, Poland, p. 10)

3.4.5. In-service trainings for teachers

▬▬ In all the partner countries, with the exception of Greece, the participants claimed that teachers should be offered additional trainings on the subject of violence. They argued that teachers lack the skills to effectively implement conflict resolution, as well as to identify some forms of violence. Therefore, many participants reported that in-service trainings for teachers, following the experiential or constructivist approach need to be offered, so that teachers develop a comprehensive understanding of the issue of violence and acquire access to pedagogical methods and relevant tools.

> Trainings that will help us to use effective methods, to improve effectiveness of conflict resolution.
>
> (School principal, Poland, p. 9)

▬▬ The kinds of trainings mentioned involved specific methods, strategies and guidelines to enact conflict resolution, whilst awareness on social hierarchies and the sensitisation of teachers and students on issues such as racism and homophobia were reported only in the cases of Greece and Romania (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016).

▬▬ As far as Greece is concerned, there was no request for additional trainings for primary education teachers, who were the subjects of the research. Nevertheless we could assume that there was an implied need for secondary education teachers' trainings. This can be concluded by the fact that the participants made a distinction between primary and secondary education teachers' pedagogical practices and therefore their awareness on issues related to social hierarchies (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 35).

3.4.6. Initial teachers' education

▬▬ The initial education of teachers was mentioned as an important factor, affecting teachers' capacity to manage violence, both in Greece and Montenegro. In the case of Greece, emphasis was placed on secondary education teachers, who were referred to as being more likely to manifest discriminatory behaviours; this could be related to the very limited engulfment of social sciences modules in their initial education (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 35). The participants suggested that future teachers should attend humanities and social sciences modules in universities, so that they acquire a comprehensive understanding of the social context in which violence is manifested (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 35). Notably, the participants in Montenegro related the need for the re-appropriation of teachers' initial education, with prevailing prejudice of teachers against LGBT people (Vujović, 2016, p. 8). By recognising inequalities, social hierarchies and prejudices, teachers would be more effective in critically analysing the school context and acting in a preventive way.

> (...) it is something that will bring results in the long run, changes will occur in the long run, starting, in our opinion, with humanities courses in university, for the teachers. And humanities courses at schools.
>
> (NGO, Greece, p. 35)

3.4.7. Evaluation matters

▬▬ Education leadership was recognised as crucial in some participating countries, in the attempts to combat violence. The participants in Greece suggested that school advisers and school principals should be properly evaluated, in order to meet the requirements that these positions bring with them. Competent education officials were portrayed as important allies to teachers, provided that the latter are trying to prevent or manage violence (Zambeta et al., 2016, p. 33-34).

> The teacher can't [make it] on his own (…) [that teacher] was trying to speak of homophobia and the school adviser was about to take the teacher's head off. It's not possible to talk, to work in a school and ask what needs be done, when the school adviser will tie a noose around your neck (…) the school principal will press the teacher downwards (…) What does that mean? Evaluation. Evaluation and the right choices made by the people holding these positions.
>
> (School principal, Greece, p. 35)

▬▬ In Montenegro, it was suggested that teachers should be assessed, in order to ensure their professional competences (Vujović, 2016, p. 7). Teachers' assessment was connected to their significant role in shaping students' future attitudes.

> We shape minds; everyone who works in school does that. Therefore, every teacher should pass the appropriate tests; strict criteria should be defined on who can be a teacher.
>
> (Social worker- representative of Roma, Montenegro, p. 7)

International dissemination meeting, Budapest, Hungary, 9th April 2016

4. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

4.1. Introduction

▬ The aim of this chapter is:

► firstly, to develop a critical understanding of the way school violence is perceived and conceptualised by the crucial social actors in the participant countries;

► secondly, to reflect on sustainable means for preventing and combatting violence at school, as part of the wider goals of the CoE Charter on supporting democratic citizenship and human rights education;

► thirdly, to formulate suggestions for further action aiming to raise awareness and develop strategies for preventing and combatting violence at schools.

▬ The chapter consists of three sections. Section one drawing upon the findings of the focus group interviews and relevant literature, aims to provide for a reflective understanding of school violence as it is conceptualised in the participant countries. More specifically, it discusses the awareness of violence at school, the definitions of violence, the reasons, forms and subjects of violence, the settings, places and occasions where violence takes place, the major variables of violence, and the main characteristics of perpetrators and victims.

Closing of the Athens meeting, Greece, 1st March 2016

◼◼◼ Section two explores the concept of the "whole community" approach as a means for preventing violence at school and developing a democratic school culture.

◼◼◼ The third section of this chapter, based on the views of the participants of the focus groups, outlines some suggestions for further action on two levels, that of the school community and that of education policy. All of the suggestions for further action are options and possibilities, and form an agenda for reflective action. They are not single-use solutions, nor would they be a panacea for all the multifaceted problems school communities face.

4.2. Perceptions of violence at school

4.2.1. Awareness of violence at school

◼◼◼ Violence is a universal phenomenon that is inherent in social relations and exists everywhere in society (Smith, 2003). Since school is a social institution where social relations are being formed, violence is an integral part of it. Schools are potential sites of violence and violence permeates them as it permeates any other social institution (Zambeta et al., 2016). During the last decades there has been an extraordinary rise in interest in the subject of school violence. What had been a largely neglected area of study rapidly became a focus for hundreds of scholars and writers from different parts of the planet (Rigby, 2002).

◼◼◼ In the view of all the partner countries, school violence is a matter of huge concern; no-one doubted that violence occurs in schools and that some children suffer appallingly as a result of it (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016). However, some of the partner countries argue, in direct contrast to general public perceptions, that violence is not increasing inside or outside schools. With this they refer mainly to physical violence that takes the form of physical punishment exercised by teachers, a practice that seems to have decreased (Zambeta et al., 2016). What has certainly increased, in contrast to actual evidence of violence, is widespread fear and concern about school violence. Some of this concern is fueled by sensationalised reporting of violent incidents in mass media (Bickmore, 2011).

4.2.2. Definitions of violence

◼◼◼ School violence is a very complex and highly ambivalent phenomenon and as a result there is not a clear and explicit definition of it (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005). Violence is a slippery term, which covers a huge and frequently changing range of physical, emotional, symbolic practices situations and relationships, and also a term which creates controversies (Henry, 2000). Researchers and practitioners use various terms in their descriptions of violent incidents, such as aggression, violence and bullying, and sometimes they use these terms interchangeably (see also Astor, Benbenishty, Pitner, & Zeira, 2004).

◼◼◼ The most commonly used term in the description of violent incidents at school is 'bullying'. Although in recent years there has been an especially widespread worry and discourse about 'bullying' (Bickmore, 2011), and the term has been used as if its definition had been obvious, its content remains somehow confused (Zambeta et al., 2016). Bullying is understood by the school and the public in varying ways, and it is often used arbitrarily as a blunt instrument referring to any kind of aggression (Bickmore, 2011). Bullying, for some, is only an entry point to the many-sided phenomenon of school violence, while for some others, it is the term they use to describe a whole spectrum of aggression (Zambeta et al., 2016). Some recognise as bullying mostly physical violence and maltreatment and tend to lay emphasis on the physical effects on bullied students describing other kinds of violence (verbal etc.) as 'normal' socialisation processes.

◼◼◼ Nonetheless, the participants of this pilot project generally agree that 'violence' is a broader term than 'bullying', and that 'bullying' involves an imbalance of power between perpetrators and victims (Olweus, 1999), intent to harm or intimidate (Coy, 2001; Pepler & Craig, 1994), and usually a pattern of repeated aggression or aggressive exclusion (physical, verbal, and/or relational) over time (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005). However there are researchers who maintain that bullying is a form of social interaction and it can be a one-off experience (Randall, 1991; Stephenson & Smith, 1991).

◼◼◼ The widespread fear and concern about bullying has been fuelled by sensationalised reporting of violent incidents in mass media (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005), and has led to exaggeration in the way 'bullying' is used by teachers, students and parents. The ubiquitous use of the term 'bullying' and the excessive reference to it sometimes create collective attitudes and behaviours that are not based on the actual extent of the phenomenon. These collective attitudes and practices concern mainly the parents who are the most vulnerable to this kind of discourse (Zambeta et al., 2016).

4.2.3. Reasons for violence

▬▬ The reasons for violence were attributed to family factors, school- structure related factors and society-related ones.

Family

▬▬ The participants in the focus groups identified the family's organisation and structure, along with disadvantaged backgrounds, as susceptible to being factors of perpetration. The correlation of family and students' involvement in incidents of violence at school is often encountered in the literature, as the way family operates, its structure and its upbringing practices are often associated with perpetration or victimisation (Rigby, 2002; Christenson, Anderson & Hirsch, 2004). Loose family ties and immigration of parents, as well as the use of violence by parents as a rearing practice are also stated as factors related to violence.

School-structure related factors

▬▬ The school as a social institution was related to violence. Institutional and pedagogical violence such as the evaluation of students, the rigidity and density of the curriculum, the tension of school time which creates haste and frustration and disciplinary methods (Harber, 2002) were mentioned as potential factors that either constitute or generate violence at school. The school's role as an institution of social control (Foucault, 1977) is therefore related to violence (Watts & Erevelles, 2004).

▬▬ Lack of communication between teachers and parents, as well as between teachers and students might induce violence. Strengthening communication among school staff, parents and students has indeed been a focal point of school violence research and intervention (Padrós, 2014). School size is correlated to violence: bigger schools make managing violence a challenging task (Harber, 2002).

▬▬ Furthermore, the existence of Roma or sometimes black students at school seems to trigger conflicts, which are neither efficiently dealt with by teachers, nor are they prevented by the curriculum, since the latter promotes official knowledge and fails to take into account the different cultural backgrounds of students (Rostas & Kostka, 2014; Watts & Erevelles, 2004; Akiba et al., 2002). The curriculum's failure to meet students' real educational needs contributes to the perpetuation of social hierarchies and produces achievement differences (Apple, 1993); something that also has implications for the extent of violence at school (Akiba et al., 2002).

▬▬ The participants emphasised the inefficiency of schools to take students' different starting points into consideration and thus its responsibility in the reproduction of social hierarchies (for example, in the case of students with disabilities). The lack of inclusive practices, which render schools "*barrier-free*" (Thomas, Walker & Webb, 2005, p. 23), accessible to their members in terms of infrastructure and education and promote equality and collaboration by considering community as a whole (ibid), were presented as a potential factor that generates violence.

Society-related factors

▬▬ Society-related reasons of violence were associated with the influence of media (Meeks-Gardner et al., 2003) and economic crisis (Zambeta et al., 2016; Vujović, 2016).

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Athens, Greece,
18th March 2016

4.2.4. Forms and subjects of violence

a. Peer violence

▰▰▰ Even though, there is not a clear and unanimous definition of school violence (Henry, 2000), strong similarities between the forms of violence, the school-dynamics, as well as the specific subjects among whom violence is expressed, can be identified at school in the participant countries. According to the participants, school violence is expressed mostly among students and takes many forms such as verbal violence (insulting and calling names, threatening to cause fear, aggressiveness with words, and consequent intimidation), non-verbal violence and physical violence (aggressiveness with acts), psychological violence (displays of favouritism or scapegoating, taking out anger, hurtfulness), social exclusion and isolation, and "visual harassment", a recently spreading form of violence that occurs through sexual content or rape-scenes being circulated on smart phones (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016).

Another form of violence is that expressed by students towards animals (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016). Violence against animals might have implications for violence against human beings (McMahan, 2005).

b. Institutional and pedagogical violence

▰▰▰ School violence is also expressed by teachers towards students in the form of punishment (Saltmarsh, Robinson & Davies, 2012). Punishment refers to reprimands, expulsions, and to any act that validates fear, pain or intimidation in students (Zambeta et al., 2016). Moreover, school violence is expressed by students towards teachers (students' aggressiveness towards teachers) (Espelage et al., 2013), by parents towards teachers, and by parents towards students (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016).

c. Parental aggressive involvement

▰▰▰ Parents take justice into their 'own hands' because as they often report, teachers don't act sufficiently in their attempt to tackle violent incidents (Olweus, 1997). In some cases parents are reported expressing violence towards teachers but also towards students who have assaulted their kids at school interfering thus in the operation of the school. Parental involvement in school life is a widely discussed and debated issue, as it is genuinely mediated by class and culture (Lareau, 2000; Buttles & van Zanten, 2007). In several cases it is met with reservation on the part of the teachers being perceived as undermining their professional identity (Zambeta et al., 2007).

4.2.5. Settings / places / occasions where violence takes place

▰▰▰ Violence takes place both on and off the school premises (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Zambeta et al., 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016). Specifically, violent incidents often occur in the classroom, but also in the public areas of schools such as school playgrounds, corridors, stairs and washrooms (Bickmore, 2011; Astor & Meyer, 2001). These incidents take place mostly during breaks, but very often before or after school, on the road to/from school, at the bus station, on the bus, in students' neighbourhoods, at the places where they hang out, and on school trips and excursions. Moreover, an increasingly prominent arena for violence, takes place in cyberspace through electronic communications (Keith & Martin, 2005).

4.2.6. Major variables of school violence

Gender

▰▰▰ Gender-related and sexualised forms of violence are critical in shaping dominant (heterosexual) masculinity and femininity in schools (Connell, 1996; Renold, 2000). In most countries, boys' violence is a means for granting someone's conformity to masculinity in same-sex groups (Zambeta et al., 2016; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016), whereas violence among girls – when emerged - is related to (feminine) consumerist practices (Vujović, 2016). As such, peer (same-sex) groups (re)produce definitions of gender (Connell 1996). Conformity with appropriate gender norms might provoke violent incidents (Zambeta et al., 2016). Homophobia, closely affiliated with obedience to gender norms, was only reported in Greece, Hungary and Montenegro.

National origin and ethnicity

▬▬ Findings concerning violence due to national origin and ethnicity as emerged in the partner countries' reports are related to the victimisation of Roma students (Zambeta et al., 2016; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; see also Kende, 2007) as well as second generation students (Zambeta et al., 2016; see also Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002; Devine, Kenny & Macneela, 2008). However, national origin and ethnicity are not always recognised by the participants as central factors in the school context (Vujović, 2016). Violence in relation to the level of education is not differentiated between primary and secondary education in most national reports. Nevertheless, in Greece such incidents occur less frequently on a primary than a secondary level of education and seem to be less evident in primary school in the past, compared to the present. Nevertheless, violence is not absent, as participants also mentioned the visibility of such incidents in secondary education.

Disabilities

▬▬ Research portrays students with disabilities as both perpetrators (Kaukiainen et al., 2002; Kuhne & Wiener, 2000; Whitney et al., 1994) and victims (Norwich & Kelly, 2004; Little, 2002). Respectively, participants in most countries related students with disabilities with both the perpetration of violence and with victimisation (Zambeta et al., 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016). In addition, national reports differentiate with regard to the intensity and patterns of violence, since sometimes parents also exert violence on students with disabilities (Zambeta et al., 2016).

Social class – social inequality

▬▬ In general, research does not show the interrelation between socio-economic status and violence in schools to be universally present (Rigby, 2004). Although some researchers may find socio-economic factors to be related to victimisation (O'Moore, Kirkham & Smith, 1997), others do not support this finding (Rigby, 2004) or find only a very small correlation (Wolke et al., 2001). Focus group participants across the different country reports stated that perpetrators and victims belong to both the most deprived and the most privileged social groups (Zambeta et al., 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Vujović 2016).

▬▬ The concept of symbolic violence is important in order to understand how social inequalities are reproduced (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Symbolic violence, in the form of isolation, does exist among different socio-economic strata; nevertheless it is not mentioned in the context of the social hierarchies in schools, since it is not often noted in such a way (Zambeta et al., 2016). Forms of violence are not related with socio-economic background. However, in Greece physical violence is reported to be perpetrated by the lowest socio-economic groups and non-physical (exclusion, threats) by the most privileged ones.

4.2.7. Main characteristics of perpetrators and victims

▬▬ Perpetration and victimisation are often explained in psychological terms (Ringrose & Renold, 2010). Participants in focus groups also described perpetrators and victims in such a manner, showing them as opposites, but without providing any perceptible personality characteristics; therefore, roles may be interchangeable (Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016). Moreover, perpetration of violence was emphatically related to students (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; Rafalska & Styslavska, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016) and less so to teachers or parents (Zambeta et al., 2016; Vujović, 2016; Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016).

Main characteristics of perpetrators

▬▬ Perpetrator's tension (Enyedi & Lázár, 2016), vulnerability, insecurity, group dependence and coercion into the perpetration of violence (Mitulescu, Scoda & Şandru, 2016; Vujović, 2016) demonstrate the peer group dynamics that strengthen perpetration (Rose et al., 2010). Furthermore, bodily traits (e.g. physical strength) (Ma, 2001) and (poor or high) achievement (Rose et al., 2010) are related to perpetration according to focus group participants.

Main characteristics of victims

▬▬ Participants described victims as passive (Zambeta et al., 2016; Vujović, 2016; see also Olweus, 2003), with low self-esteem, unpopular, and excluded from peer groups (Zambeta et al., 2016; Vujović, 2016; see also Rose et al., 2010). Victimisation may result in isolation, since it is often concealed from school or family members (Zambeta et al., 2016; Enyedi & Lázár, 2016; see also Roberts & Coursol, 1996). Obesity (Griffiths et al., 2006) and lack of conformity with fashion demands are also reported as body-image related characteristics of victims (Vujović, 2016).

4.3. Means for combatting violence at school. The "Whole community" approach for a democratic school culture

▰▰▰ Violence at school violates human rights and endangers the right to education *per se*. In tackling violence, schools need to enhance social awareness and boost a democratic school culture grounded on the principles of EDC/HRE.

▰▰▰ Based on the outcomes of this pilot project we could argue that schools can be perceived as public spaces where issues such as violence are addressed in response to the aims of the community to tackle them. This could happen if schools were to be transformed into inclusive and democratic systems placing emphasis on social justice, respect for others, critical inquiry, equality, freedom, concern for the collective good (Giroux, 2004), and in fact to build a democratic school culture by following the "whole community" approach.

▰▰▰ The "whole community" approach as a means for preventing violence at school has been central in several projects, most prominently in the Council of Europe's Pestalozzi programme (Council of Europe, 2012). However, the concept of the whole community seems to be reduced to the school community, i.e. educators, parents and local community and as a matter of fact the notion of community is conceptualised in terms of locality (Lajovic, 2012). While the spatial aspect of community cannot be ignored, the relational dimension is essential for a non-static and dynamic understanding of the term. According to Boyes-Watson (2005), community is not only a mode of connection in terms of locality, but also a means and a sense of belonging, which generates social action. This approach entails a shift of power from central government institutions towards the community, by establishing networks of relationships among citizens and organisations in order to achieve balanced partnerships.

▰▰▰ In this pilot project our understanding of the "whole-community" does not entail a nostalgic adoration of the pre-industrial sense of '*gemeinschaft*,'[2] (as it is defined by Ferdinard Tönnies), which involves the existence of an organic life based on traditional ties and emotional bonds among the members of a community attached to a certain place. In contemporary complex, highly urbanised, industrial and post-industrial societies, traditional bonding fades, social relationships are largely impersonal and political allegiances are forged around contractual rights and obligations. On the other hand, contemporary modes of belonging and political engagement are rather reflexive and non-abiding by traditional long-lasting commitments (Hustinx & Lamertyn, 2003). Scepticism towards grand narratives and traditional ideologies, distantiation towards one's own context, presentism as against nostalgic images of the past, acceptance of hybridity and awareness of other cultures are perceived as basic components of a contemporary urban citizenship identity. These qualities are considered as corresponding to the notion of "cosmopolitanism", which is a virtue of post-modern citizenship as defined by Turner (2000).

▰▰▰ In this context of fluidity and uncertainty, an attempt to construct the "whole community" as a public space of citizenship engagement, involvement and commitment seems quite optimistic and challenging. Bob Jessop, considering the notion of deliberative (participatory) democracy, suggests the viewpoint of what he calls the "romantic ironist": "in contrast to cynics, ironists act in 'good faith' and *seek to involve others* in the process of policy-making, not for manipulative purposes but in order to bring about conditions for negotiated consent and self-reflexive learning … become a self-reflexive means … coping with failures, contradictions, dilemmas and paradoxes that are an inevitable feature of life. In this sense participatory governance is a crucial means of defining the objectives as well as objects of governance as well as of facilitating the co-realisation of these objectives by reinforcing motivation and mobilizing capacities for self-reflection, self-regulation, and self-correction" (Jessop, 2002, p. 55).

▰▰▰ Since schools are learning-focused institutions, they might find it easier, relatively speaking, to cope with the ironic challenges of "self-reflexive learning", "self-regulation" and "self-correction" in the realisation of democratic school practices. A more difficult challenge for schools would be to define who the important "others" to be involved in the democratic process are. The crucial question is "who has the right to participate" in a democratic school governance model? Who has the right to address problems, such as violence in schools? Who has the right to be heard? In other terms, the question is who are the important "stakeholders" in building the school's "whole community"? In times of globalisation and international flows of movement, citizenship-as-we-know-it is an insufficient basis of legitimacy in defining participatory governance, not least because it would exclude social strata and populations that are already represented among the student population. Moreover, citizenship based legitimacy is confined within the state-centred vision of policy-making (Heinelt, 2002, p. 27). On the question of legitimacy Heinelt (2002), citing Schmitter (2002), argues that "persons/

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2. Tönnies in his effort to categorise social ties and in the light of Weber's dichotomy, he utilised the dichotomy Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft, which is usually translated community and society. Gemeinschaft (community) refers to personal social ties formed by interpersonal social interaction, while Gesellschaft (society) appeals to the more complex and impersonal bonds formed by indirect social interactions.

organisations who could potentially be invited or allowed to participate [because] they possess some quality or resource that entitles them to participate" are distinguished as "rights-holders, space-holders, knowledge-holders, share-holders, stake-holders, interest-holders and status-holders" (ibid.). More specifically (and based on Schmitter's analysis again):

► rights-holders are defined in terms of citizenship rights;

► space-holders are those who are legitimated on the basis of living within a certain territory;

► knowledge-holders are perceived on the basis of expertise;

► share-holders are defined in terms of ownership;

► stake-holders are understood as those who are materially or spiritually affected by decision making;

► interest-holders are those related to a particular interest group;

► status-holders are those officially representing organised interests. (Klausen & Sweeting, 2005, pp. 225-226).

▬▬ According to Klausen and Sweeting (2005) participatory governance is characterised by horizontal relationships between the social actors involved and networking at the level of the community. Community involvement places emphasis on the group level instead of focussing on the individual. It implies a sense of commonality and integration; there can be several types of communities such as communities of identity, communities of place, or communities of interest (ibid, p. 218).

▬▬ The "Whole Community" approach implies the holistic integration of the various "-holders" in participatory governance aiming at horizontal relationships and networking. In this sense, the "Whole Community" approach is an umbrella term for the involvement and engagement of the whole community in democratic school governance; this would actively involve crucial stakeholders, such as teachers, students, parents and educational leadership in schools. More importantly, the highlight of this approach is the involvement of civil society in school, so as to develop habits of civic and political engagement based on relationships of trust, cooperation and support. The opening up of the school to the community enhances the democratic commitment of both school and community stakeholders and strengthens collective commitment to the basic principles of democratic coexistence and respect (Thomas, 2012; Bangs & Frost, 2012).

▬▬ Hence, based on the aforementioned information, we should aim to work for an open, democratic school (Freire, 1994), which embraces the Whole Community Approach and focuses on building a democratic school culture that develops EDC/HRE, and promotes a sense of civic responsibility along with intercultural understanding, as well as respect for human rights.

▬▬ In this kind of school, teachers could work not individually but collegially in response to the perceived needs of their pupils (Ball, 2013), and would stimulate students to think critically, to question, to have a passion for knowledge and creative curiosity, to feel the joy of learning (Freire, 1994). Such a school would teach students to resolve conflict situations and develop competences and skills to help them face challenges, it would inspire conciliation and peace, promote an understanding of identity and diversity (Held, 2005; McKinnon, 2005; Tan, 2005), and would meet the needs of teachers, students, parents, education leadership and the community as a whole (Bigelow, 2006).

Dissemination event, Athens, Greece, 18th March 2016

▬▬ In order for this to happen the innovative potential of schools, teachers and communities needs to be released (Fielding & Moss, 2011); education communities should re-establish trust in teachers and schools and build a proper sense of an inclusive school. Teachers need opportunities to reflect on their work experience, communicate with colleagues and the school community; the capabilities of students, parents and other local stakeholders need to be developed so that they participate, discuss, challenge and critically analyse their everyday experiences (Ball, 2013). A new democratic professionalism based on the fundamental values of human rights and democracy needs to be built, with teachers' professional agency at its core (Stevenson & Gilliland, 2015).

4.4. Suggestions for further action

A. At the community level within schools

Engagement of the whole community

▬▬ As already mentioned, the highlight of this approach is the opening up of the school to the wider community. The "whole community" should be the school's public space of deliberative democratic governance, based on dialogue, transparency, tolerance and respect for heterogeneity. Social awareness of inequalities and discriminatory practices, secularity, affirmation of social, cultural and gender diversity are basic components for building the whole community as a sustainable strategy to prevent violence at school. Some stakeholders that could contribute to the prevention and management of violence are local authorities (municipality), municipal social services (social workers, psychologists), activist groups, non-governmental and civil society organisations, museums and universities. By opening up to the local community, school violence is highlighted and conceptualised as a social phenomenon which is to be seen as a collective problem, then addressed and managed. Developing and maintaining a dialogue among teachers, parents, students and other local authorities is an intervention of the utmost importance for combatting violence. This could be implemented through regular meetings to resolve emerging issues in school life by promoting teamwork and creating a positive school climate (Cowie et al., 2008). This collaboration would possibly lead to more efficient conflict resolution strategies and to a common approach to regulations regarding discipline, since schools' disciplinary methods are often punishment oriented, hence inefficient or inappropriate, as reported by the participating countries.

Seminar held in Sinaia, Romania, 9-11 March 2016

Democratic school governance: A school charter on children's and human rights

As emerged from the focus groups' analyses, discussion around the issue of violence at the beginning of each school year (and then on a regular basis during the school year, as we will see below) is very important for the prevention, management and combatting of violence. This discussion would engage teachers, school principals, parents and students in dialogue, allowing mutual understanding and agreement on a mutually agreed charter/school plan based on the principles of EDC/HRE, such as tolerance, inclusion, and respect.

Developing students' active participation in school governance

Students are themselves vital stakeholders in the school community and should feel that the school meets their expectations and needs. School governance should encourage the development of active democratic citizenship on the part of the students (Down & Smyth, 2012; Whitty, 2002), that is, among other things, the active participation of the students in the formation of school life regulations and activities (Biesta, Lawy & Kelly, 2009). This could be achieved by the utilisation of the institution of students' councils for the promotion of school dialogue.

Teachers' awareness, professional autonomy, responsibility and commitment

Teachers' professionalism and personal commitment to their work are indispensable for addressing and coping with school violence. According to many participants of the focus groups interviews, critical educators who are committed to human rights, who actively seek to stay informed, use a range of teaching styles, and encourage students to be active participants in the wider societal context are the answer for handling violence in schools. In this respect teachers should be aware on issues, such as homophobia and xenophobia, teachers should communicate effectively with both students and parents, should have confidence in their own abilities, as well as high morale, self-esteem, positive energy and the motivation to innovate and develop differentiated practices that improve learning and inclusion (Johnson & Hallgarten, 2002).

A school policy of prevention and counselling

A clear policy of prevention is vital for dealing with violence. Such a policy should be planned, designed and decided upon at school level. One suggestion would be the preparation of an action plan for addressing possible violent incidents, for all members of the school community to be aware of possible ways of dealing with violence. For instance, a suggestion, which came up from the partner countries' focus groups, was the development of peer mediation processes. Peer mediation is a widely researched type of conflict resolution education initiative with impressively positive effects (Bickmore, 2002; Burrell, Zirbel & Allen, 2003; Harris, 2005; Jones, 2004). Moreover, conflict resolution could be assisted by counselling services from psychologists, who might work towards enhancing communication among the members of the school (school staff, parents, and teachers).

Parental awareness and support

The importance of the role of parents in the education framework was extensively discussed by all those bringing information to this project. In some participant countries Parental Counselling Schools were perceived as essential in order to facilitate parental awareness and support in the school's violence prevention policy. Parents' associations should also be encouraged to participate in school life and contribute to collective processes, such as in decision making (Schwerdtfeger Gallus, Shreffler, Merten, and Cox, 2014).

B. At the education policy level

Pre-service education (universities) / emphasis on humanities and social sciences education

In order to facilitate the prevention and combatting of school violence, teachers must be capable of understanding and analysing violence as a social phenomenon. All the informants of this project underlined the critical role of initial education for teachers in fostering their readiness to deal with violence at school. The idea that the relevant university departments should encompass humanities and social sciences modules, something that is not always the case for the university departments attended by future teachers, was well supported.

Continuous support to the work of schools and teachers

Teachers, in order to respond to the aforementioned challenges and become capable of combatting school violence, need support from trained professionals, such as social workers and psychologists, as well as moral rewards from society. They also need further training and teaching seminars to enable them to address incidents of violence at school. Moreover, teachers need time and space to discuss with their colleagues and collectively reflect upon their work experience. In this manner, teachers would take time to elaborate further on their practices and share their concerns with colleagues during pedagogical sessions. This strategy could also prevent teachers' burnout.

Piloting seminar_Podgorica, Montenegro, 26 March 2016

The importance of early childhood education

▬▬ It is considered essential that any measure designed to develop active democratic citizenship in the framework of human rights education needs to start from the early years which are fundamental (Samuelsson & Kaga, 2008). Early childhood institutions can be, first and foremost, places of democratic political practice and as a matter of fact public spaces for building and enhancing a democratic citizenship culture.

Policies on the development of education leadership

▬▬ Education leadership also has a vital role in promoting and supporting democratic school culture and in the development of a positive school climate that can work in a preventive way against violence. Education officials, such as school principals and school advisers, can decisively act in this respect, by promoting a culture of dialogue and by facilitating teachers' efforts to work towards the development of a democratic school. In order to ensure education officials' skills correspond to their critical duties, it was suggested that they should be properly selected, trained and evaluated.

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APPENDICES

GREECE	HUNGARY	MONTENEGRO	POLAND	ROMANIA
Prohibition of corporal punishment at schools (1998 & 2005) **Ministry of Education circular of recommendations on combatting school violence** (2011) (in cooperation with the Children's Ombudsman) **Criminal Code** (2015) Infliction of damage by 'continuous cruel behaviour' is a criminal offense (liability when dependency)	**Public Education Act of 1993:** in compliance with the UNCRC (Discipline methods should take into account children's human dignity. Elimination of practices involving physical, mental violence, abuse, neglect) **Public Education Act of 2011:** refers to students', teachers' and parents' obligations and entitlements on the protection of corporal and mental health, respect and human dignity. **Criminal Code:** (Battery: bodily harm, different penalties according to the extent/permanence of inflicted damage)	**The General Law on Education:** a. **Prohibition of discrimination** (physical, psychological and social violence, neglect, insult, sexual abuse of children and employees) b. **School mediation for conflict resolution** among all members of school community. c. Teachers suspended if accused of crimes against sexual freedom. d. Rights and obligations of students: respect personality of other students.	No explicit legal definition of school violence. Several provisions of criminal liability for actions or non-action regarding violence, including peer violence, in Family and Penal law. **Criminal Code** (1997) a. Criminal liability when permanent or temporary dependence on the perpetrator (art. 207 §1) b. Teachers' responsibility and obligation to notify the prosecutor or the police (art. 304) c. Liability of public officials who exceeded their powers or failed to comply with obligations (art. 231)	Compliance with the UNCRC recommendations regarding the child's rights - national action plan (since 1995). Legislation on: – **Rules** on the school's operation (2001) – **Prohibition of corporal punishment** at schools (2004) – **Child protection** against abuse, neglect, exploitation (2004) – **Prevention** of children trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation (2001 & 2004) – **Elimination of child labour** (2004) – **Specific regulations on school violence** referring to prevention of violence, students' victimisation, juvenile delinquency and crime by means of cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior (2001 & 2002) School supervision is the responsibility of the community police (2004) The Ministry of Education is participating in action plans on human trafficking, juvenile delinquency and crime, sexual exploitation of children and child labour.
Age of criminal liability: 15	**Age of criminal liability: 14/12**	**Age of criminal liability: 14**	**Age of criminal liability: 15**	**Age of criminal liability: 14/16**

Table 2: Policies on school violence

POLICIES	GREECE	HUNGARY	MONTENEGRO	POLAND	ROMANIA
Independent authorities on Children's Rights	**Deputy Ombudsman of the Child**	**Commissioner for Fundamental Rights (Ombudsman for Future Generations)** **United Nations Equal Treatment Authority – Hungary**	Ombudsman (with responsibility on children's rights as well)	**Deputy Ombudsman of the Child**	**Deputy Ombudsman of the Child**
Central institutions on school violence	**Observatory for the Prevention of School Violence and Bullying (Ministry of Education)**	**Office of Educational Commissioner on Educational Rights (Ministry of Education)** **Ministerial Committee to tackle school violence**			**National Council to Prevent and Combat Violence in School established by the Ministry of Education**
National networks, policies & programmes on school violence	**Network on Information, Training, Prevention and Combatting of School Violence and Bullying** (EU funded project) **Network against Violence in Schools** **Network for the Prevention and Combatting of Corporal Punishment of Children** **Safer internet Awareness Center** **Health Education Programmes** **Pan-Hellenic Day against Violence at School**	**School Conflict Information Center** **Prevention programmes implemented by the Hungarian Police** **Health education & development programmes at all schools**	«**School without Violence**» national project	**State Programme "Safe and Friendly School"** (tools for stakeholders to increase safety at schools – whole local community approach) **State programme "Safe+"** (local level) (EU funded project) **"Safer Internet" Programme** **Curriculum policy** Schools obliged to develop a whole school transversal curriculum focused on prevention of violence (2002)	**Ministry National Strategy** (at individual, family, school, community, societal level) **Youth against Violence** (EU funded project) **Actions of the Romanian Police:** National Campaign **Curriculum policy** Debates on situations of violence; enhancing relevant topics
Education material & training	**Provided by the national project on School violence and various other initiatives** **Teacher training schemes**	**Tools for the development of social competences of teachers** **Adaptation of the Finnish anti-bullying KIVA programme** (in progress)	**Provided by the "School without violence" project** **Teacher training schemes**	**Manual** 'School without violence – a safe school environment' **Tools and guidelines for teachers**	**Guide on Preventing and Combatting Violence in Schools** **Teacher training schemes**

Table 3: Terminology

3.a Terminology in legal framework	GREECE	HUNGARY	MONTENEGRO	POLAND	ROMANIA
Definitions of violence	Violence as aggression among students, eventually equated to bullying. No specific different forms of violence in legal framework.	No explicit definition of violence. Violence mainly considered as 'bodily harm'. Implicitly mentioned in actions for safe school environment.	No definition of violence, but connection of different forms of violence (physical, psychological and social violence) with discrimination. Reference to "*crimes against sexual freedoms*"	School violence used interchangeably with "peer violence". No reference to bullying. No explicit legal definition. School violence included in domestic violence's legal definition which is viewed as asymmetrical relationships.	Reference to school violence, victimisation, aggression: terms used interchangeably. Violence defined as "*antisocial acts*" Recognition of possible forms in legal framework. Indirect connection of violence with discrimination through the anti-discrimination law.
3.b Terminology in activities undertaken by governmental bodies	GREECE	HUNGARY	MONTENEGRO	POLAND	ROMANIA
Definitions of violence	Terms used in activities by governmental bodies are (school) violence, bullying, aggression. There seems to be a terminological differentiation among terms, especially bullying and violence (many programmes titles' use them as separate conceptual categories)	Violence clearly stated, but not defined. Emphasis on prevention by both school-related institutions and police.	Definition of different forms of violence.	The broader thematic scope of activities undertaken by governmental bodies is safety in educational institutions. Safety is either connected to youth's and children's problematic behaviour (violence and aggression is defined as a feature of such behaviour) or connected to physical safety in schools and cyber-safety.	Reference to school violence Violence as forms of relationships of asymmetrical power. Violence is also defined in terms of children's protection and safety.

3.c Terminology in research	GREECE	HUNGARY	MONTENEGRO	POLAND	ROMANIA
Definitions of violence	School violence is reduced to bullying with special emphasis on Olweus' model of analysis. Attention on bullying as a symptom and not on violence as a sociological concept susceptible to be generated through school institutions.	Bullying, aggression and school violence alternately used- no distinction in terms' content. Olweus' definition of bullying. No consensus on types and frequency of bullying. Bullying/ Violence: among students, between teachers and students (teachers to students) both in primary and secondary education. Closely related to class climate.	(Peer) Violence and bullying are alternately used. There seems to be an awareness of the different context in which both terms are used, the definitional ambiguity is owing to the lack of conceptualisation in Montenegrin language. Violence connected to safety in schools, however, at the same time is also defined as institutional, directed from institutions to children.	Terminological distinction between school violence, bullying and aggression. Violence defined as power relations. Bullying as repeated act. Focus on the social context in which violence occurs: violence interrelated to "class atmosphere/ climate" (positive school/class atmosphere, less violence in schools).	Violence, aggression and bullying used without clear distinction between them. Violence recognised as a sociological concept ("*social phenomena*", having "*social causes*") generated through institutions, such as school and family (in the latter, violence is "learned" in familial contexts, e.g. authoritarian parenting style, domestic violence). Violence as asymmetrical relationships, relations among students and between students and teachers, teachers and their hierarchies, exercise of power (teacher-student hierarchy, e.g. violence used as discipline by teachers, "*vulnerable*" students). Violence also connected with the concept of "safety" of educational actors, "secured" by police.

Table 4: Gender

Gender	GREECE	HUNGARY	MONTENEGRO	POLAND	ROMANIA
Conceptualisation	Mainly as 'sex', except for European Union agency for Fundamental Rights Report	Exclusively as 'sex' Boys/girls	Exclusively as 'sex' Boys/girls	Exclusively as 'sex' Boys/girls	Exclusively as 'sex' Boys/girls
Roles in bullying	Boys are more frequently involved in bullying incidents than girls (perpetrators or victims), although girls are more frequently victimised because of their gender.	Girls either victims or bystanders, boys bullies.	No reference	Boys are more frequently subject to victimisation than girls. Boys are more often perpetrators than girls.	Boys more frequently physically victimised than girls (+form of bullying)
Forms of bullying	Girls are aggressive with "words", that is verbal or indirect bullying. Boys are aggressive with certain "acts", that is physical bullying.	Non-physical, indirect forms, e.g. exclusion and rumour spreading, related to girls, physical forms of violence mostly related to boys.	Forms of violence differentiated according to gender (girls use verbal forms of violence)	Boys more often physically victimised.	Boys more frequently physically victimised than girls.
Other findings	Violence connected to gender identity: boys and girls engage in school bullying differently, according to socially constructed, gender-appropriate patterns of behaviour. Boys are more frequently bullies, girls are more frequently victims. Talking to parents or friends is also differentiated according to gender (boys' fear of stigmatisation as "cowards" entails the concealment of being bullied, unlike with girls).				

Table 5: Origin

Origin	GREECE	HUNGARY	MONTENEGRO	POLAND	ROMANIA
It appears as a variable in 2 countries' reports	National origin is sometimes used as a bullying variable. Even though racist attacks are mentioned on the basis of ethnic belonging or country of origin, there are no significant data susceptible to estimate the importance of these variables in school-violence research.	No association –origin does not come up as a variable	No association –origin does not come up as a variable	No association –origin does not come up as a variable	Mobility issues come up as a 'social cause' of school violence: 'Increase of the general freedom of movement;' but not explicitly connected to immigration. Roma children report being beaten by teachers 2-3 times more than Romanian children (14 % compared to 6 %)

Table 6: Approaches to violence

Approaches to violence	GREECE	HUNGARY	MONTENEGRO	POLAND	ROMANIA
Patterns (research)	The vast majority of the studies refer to bullying as an act, which takes place exclusively among students, while implications for other patterns of bullying are rather rare.	Mainly bullying among students. Less teacher to student violence	Mainly student to student violence/ bullying. Less teacher to student violence.	Mainly violence and bullying among students. Less teacher to student violence.	Mainly among students (aggressive behavior, bullying) and less on other patterns, such as school staff to students, parents to students and students to school staff.
Discipline	Olweus model of analysis. Most studies draw on (clinical and social) psychology, mental health and fewer on sociology	Olweus definition and model of analysis.	The study used an interdisciplinary approach. (…) school violence is viewed as a phenomenon that can occur in peer interaction amongst children, in adult interaction with children as well as amongst adults, if the essence of the violent relationship is connected with the school life.	Methodological tool/concept: 'School climate', 'School atmosphere'	The main orientation of research is the psychological one. Few studies in this period have adopted the sociological paradigm.

Table 7: Socio-economic status

Socio-economic status	GREECE	HUNGARY	MONTENEGRO	POLAND	ROMANIA
Types of schools	No correlation with types of schools.	Socio-economic status comes up in a rather contradictory way: 1) While type of school is found to be irrelevant, "homogeneous grammar schools show less aggression" and "aggression as a personality trait is more frequent in vocational schools (also true for teachers)" This finding is also supported by another study 2) "Violent acts are less frequent in secondary grammar schools" but it is also stated that " No correlation was found with socio-economic status"	No reference to socio-economic status.	Findings regarding school violence vary according to the types of school but it is not explicitly connected to socio-economic issues.	No correlation with types of schools.
Family's socio-economic status	Parents' socio-economic status is correlated with vulnerability to victimisation (e.g. both parents unemployed) Socio-economic indicators show that a lower school performance and father's employment status are associated with perpetration (while father's retirement was associated with a lower risk of perpetration)	Hardly any correlation with socio-economic status.		Family's low socio-economic status is related to perpetration and victimisation (i.e. exclusion)	Parents' level of education and social class connected to students' violent behaviours: e.g. "The more there are new middle class students (in post-communism), the greater seems to be the pressure to get a position within the class and school social network by victimizing the weaker students. It is assumed that they are part of those whose fathers do not have higher education."

ENG

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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