

# Toward effective perpetrator programmes in line with European standards



Bridging policy, practice, and co-operation  
for impactful programmes for perpetrators  
of domestic violence

**Budapest, 2–3 June 2026**

**European Youth Centre,  
Zivatar utca 1-3**

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## CONCEPT NOTE

### Background information

Violence against women, including domestic violence, remains one of the most serious and widespread human rights violations in Europe. Ensuring women's right to live free from violence requires sustained and co-ordinated action by states, supported by strong legal frameworks, effective institutions and specialised services.

The [Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) (Istanbul Convention) provides a comprehensive legal framework in Europe for addressing these issues. Article 16 of the convention mandates Parties to establish and support perpetrator programmes aimed at teaching non-violent behaviour, preventing further violence, and promoting behavioural change. These programmes must prioritise victim safety and support, operating in close co-operation with specialist victim services.

The [Explanatory Report](#) to the Istanbul Convention and subsequent Council of Europe [Guidance for safe and effective perpetrator programmes: Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention \(2024\)](#) and [European standards for perpetrator programmes \(2023\)](#) outline core principles for effective perpetrator programmes. These include ensuring perpetrator accountability, integrating a gender perspective, addressing harmful gender norms, applying structured and evidence-based methodologies, and embedding programmes within multi-agency frameworks. Participation may be voluntary or court-mandated, but in all cases, interventions must reinforce, not replace, protection and support for victims.

Across Europe, perpetrator programmes are delivered in diverse settings – community services, probation services, prisons and civil society organisations. To be effective, programmes must prioritise safety and wellbeing of survivors and integrate a gender perspective. Effective perpetrator programmes also require clear referral pathways, sustainable funding, appropriate legal and policy frameworks, qualified and supervised facilitators, and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Success must be measured through improved safety outcomes for women and children, behavioural and attitudes change and risk reduction.

## Conference objectives

Organised under the Council of Europe [Ending violence against women: multi-country programme](#), in co-operation with the [European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence \(WWP EN\)](#), the conference aims to strengthen the implementation of Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention by providing support for the development of safe, effective and accountable domestic violence perpetrator programmes.

The conference will:

### Strengthen policy and practice

- ▶ Clarify the role of perpetrator programmes within a victim-centred and human-rights-based response to domestic violence.
- ▶ Present evidence on programme outcomes, system-level benefits and impacts on the safety and well-being of women and children.

### Support the design of effective and safe perpetrator programmes

- ▶ Review the core principles, components and quality standards set out in the Council of Europe Article 16 Guidance.
- ▶ Explore approaches to integrating gender perspectives and victims' safety, and to strengthening risk assessment and risk management.

### Enhance co-operation with specialist victim support services

- ▶ Promote effective and sustainable models of co-operation and information sharing that ensure victim safety, accountability and co-ordinated interventions.

### Reinforce evaluation, monitoring and accountability

- ▶ Identify tools and indicators for assessing improved safety and wellbeing of the victims, behavioural and attitudes change, programme impact and compliance with European standards.

### Facilitate peer learning and national action planning

- ▶ Provide structured opportunities for national reflection, identification of gaps, and initial steps toward strengthening national frameworks and programme quality.

## Key themes

The conference will address the following themes:

### Perpetrator programmes within a comprehensive response to violence against women

- ▶ Role and obligations under the Istanbul Convention.
- ▶ Perspectives of policy makers, practitioners, researchers and victim support services.
- ▶ Evidence on effectiveness, outcomes and societal benefits.

### Standards and components of effective programmes

- ▶ European quality standards and common implementation challenges.
- ▶ Gender-sensitive approaches and addressing gender stereotypes that contribute to violence.

### Strengthening co-operation and multi-agency frameworks

- ▶ Co-operation between perpetrator programmes and specialist women's support services.
- ▶ Referral pathways, partner contact procedures and risk management.
- ▶ Engagement of justice, police, social services, probation and health sectors.

### Monitoring, evaluation and data collection

- ▶ Indicators and methodologies for measuring behavioural change and risk reduction.
- ▶ Reliable data collection and reporting for national oversight and monitoring.

### Good practices on policy approaches, legal frameworks and sustainability

- ▶ Embedding domestic violence perpetrator programmes in national strategies and coordination frameworks.
- ▶ Funding models, accreditation mechanisms and long-term sustainability.

## Participants

More than 100 participants, including:

**Participants from the countries where the Council of Europe provides technical co-operation support.**

- ▶ National policy makers, governmental representatives and authorities responsible for perpetrator programmes and domestic violence policy.
- ▶ Legal professionals and police officers, practitioners from perpetrator programmes, prisons, probation services, social services and other front-line professionals and experts.
- ▶ Representatives of specialist women's support services and civil society organisations.

**Representatives of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Division and the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO).**

**Representatives and experts from international networks, including European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (WWP EN).**

## Resources

Resource tables featuring publications and other relevant materials will be available for participants to take and share their materials with other conference participants.

## Working languages

Albanian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, English and Romanian.

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all 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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