

**Good morning to all,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**In the behalf of the Portuguese Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, I want to congrats the North-South Center of the Council of Europe and its partner European Commission, for the organization of this conference, with such an important and present issue as it is the discussion about how to reinforce the protection against girls against gender-based violence.**

Today we have in this room a lot of experts from civil society, governments and intergovernmental organisations across North-Africa, the Middle East and Europe, together they will help the reflection about the best ways to raising awareness on the need for urgent and coordinated action from the local to the international level to ensure girls' access to rights and support services.

**Portugal approved an National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination – Portugal + Equal  
For the period of 2018-2030.**

This Strategy has 3 action plans. One of those is The Action Plan for the Prevention and Combat of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, that includes specific objectives, measures and actions related to the prevention of gender-based, domestic and violence against women, including girls.

The strategic dimension is to eradicate any type of social tolerance to the various manifestations of violence against women and girls, raise awareness of its impacts and promote a culture of non-violence, human rights, equality and non-discrimination.

- How to do this? We believe we need to guarantee:
  - a) The transversality of the theme of gender-based violence.
  - b) The development of qualified prevention programs, for strategic publics like enterprises, public entities, and professionals.
  
- In terms of actions in the area of prevention, we form the following stand out:
  1. Creation of a structured primary prevention program aimed at all educational cycles (from preschool to 12th grade);

2. Qualification of the national net of victims support, in particular the technical teams of the care structures, for the implementation of primary prevention programs;
3. Dissemination, implementation and promotion of training providing a Minimum Standards Guide for the development and implementation of primary and secondary prevention programs and the Guide for professionals working with children and young people, both launched in 2020, and development of technical guidelines in scope of secondary prevention;
4. Development, support and monitoring of prevention projects in different sectors and institutions such as schools, educational centers (eg intervention model for gender equality and non-discrimination), children's and youth homes, HEIs, health services, in conjunction with the civil society, including a focus on dating violence, online violence and toxic masculinities.
5. Financing for projects to prevent and combat VMVD, including, within the framework of the structural funds, technical and financial support to NGOs, training of strategic audiences, specific

instruments for the protection of victims and awareness-raising actions

6. Creation of a network of partner entities in the area of primary prevention;
  7. Attribution of a quality seal to information, awareness and primary prevention materials produced with public funding.
- Also noteworthy was the creation, in Portugal, in 2021, **of the first specialized responses of psychological and psychotherapeutic support for children and young victims of domestic violence (30 teams, 67 Psychologists).**
    - When family relationships, particularly between parents or caregivers, are characterized by conflict and violence, there is an increased likelihood that the child will learn these patterns of interaction, believe they are legitimate, and replicate them – not only within the family but also in others. contexts (eg School) – thus creating the conditions for the intergenerational transmission of violence.

We expect that the existence of this response can work as a relevant contribution to breaking the cycle of domestic violence.

Public policies to prevent and combat gender-based violence is the keyword!

- In Portugal, the performance of national public policies reflects an integrated approach to the protection of girls in relation to gender, domestic and violence against women. It covers three levels of performance:
  1. Primary Prevention - Development of actions and approaches whose objective is to prevent violence **before it occurs**, with people and groups whose risk is, from the outset, non-existent.
  2. Secondary Prevention - Development of actions and approaches focused on **immediate responses** to situations of violence that have already been identified in people or groups considered to be at risk.
  3. Tertiary Prevention - Development of actions and approaches aimed at interventions designed at people or groups with a history of perpetrated or suffered violence, with a view to **rehabilitation, reintegration**, minimization of the impact of trauma and reduction of possible constraints and/or disabilities associated with violence in the medium and long term.

Finally,

We believe that the best strategy is also the one that acts early in the prevention of violence! Therefore, education is fundamental in all this process. Children and youth must be aware that gender-based violence exists, that is wrong behavior, that is a consequence of bias and gender stereotypes, and that it is a crime and should be combated ever, no matter what. That is something that our kids need to know! Prevention starts every day! As sooner as better!

Thank you very much!

Sandra Ribeiro

President

29 Junho 2022