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## **"The Other Side of the Story: Perpetrators in Change" (OSSPC)**

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**Public policy recommendations on the needs and importance of developing perpetrator  
programmes in the form of noncriminal justice intervention in Romania**

formulated within activity

**Time for Change: Evidence based research for new practice approaches (WP 2)**

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## 1. Introduction

"**The Other Side of the Story: Perpetrators in Change**" (OSSPC) project is a collaborative project, **co-funded by the European Union** in the framework of **The Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)**, which aims to prevent further domestic violence and to change violent behavioral patterns by increasing the capacity of frontline workers that will further teach perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships and understand the impact of domestic violence on them, their family and the community<sup>1</sup>.

The OSSPC project is being implemented between 1.05.2020-30.04.2022 by: The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family - APHVF, Cyprus, **as coordinator**, and Bournemouth University -BU, United Kingdom, Centro di Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti Onlus- CAM, Italy, The Union of Women Associations of Heraklion Prefecture -UWAH, Greece, European Knowledge Spot, Greece and Direcția de Asistență Socială și Medicală -DASM, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, **as partners**.

**The Set of Policy Recommendations on domestic violence perpetrator intervention programmes** is part of activity **Time for Change: Evidence based research for new practice approaches (WP 2)**, which aims to map and comparatively analyse the current work with perpetrators in the participating countries; estimate the scale of the problem; provide a needs assessment and discover potential referral routes, suggesting relevant perpetrator programme for professionals in the form of non-criminal justice intervention.

Each partner has formulated a set of policy recommendations on domestic violence perpetrator intervention programmes, taking into consideration the specificities of each country. The specific recommendations regarding policymaking emanate from the national research and comparative analysis which every partner of the consortium has completed.

## 2. Defining the problem / identifying the needs.

### 2.1. Defining the problem and identifying its causes

The complex issues in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence can be focused on a series of necessary action directions, both on the direction of improving and consolidating the legal framework applicable in the field and on regulating adequate support and protection measures for victims and also measures needed to prevent

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.osspc.eu](http://www.osspc.eu).





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domestic violence and recidivism, including intervention-oriented measures for family perpetrators.

To stop domestic violence, it is necessary to work with family perpetrators as well. Perpetrator programs are just one form of intervention. They must be integrated into a comprehensive intervention scheme and coupled with the protection and legal support of victims.<sup>2</sup>

In recent years, Romania has undertaken an ambitious and comprehensive reform of the domestic violence legislation and has consistently taken steps to ratify and prepare for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

In view of the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, following the adoption of the necessary primary legislation, it is necessary to develop normative documents at the level of secondary and tertiary legislation to provide concrete working tools, procedures and methodologies to support the performance of tasks and responsibilities of all specialists working in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence.

The development of the legal framework must necessarily be doubled by professional training of specialists and by adapted preparation for the intervention of different categories of specialists.

The principle according to which it is the duty of the state and not of the victim to initiate proceedings against the perpetrator has been established in numerous International documents. The UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) has developed model strategies, which have been approved by the General Assembly (United Nations, 1997).

In the complex picture of interventions for preventing and combating domestic violence, sanctioning the family perpetrator is a controversial segment, one that has a slower pace of development than that of services dedicated to the victim of domestic violence and to its protection. Several fundamental problems have generated this gap, including the socio-cultural context, the divergences between professionals on the causes of the phenomenon or the ethical dilemma regarding the intrusion of the state in private life, in married life.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>[http://fileservers.wavenetwork.org/trainingmanuals/Bridging\\_Gaps\\_MultiAgency\\_Cooperation\\_2006\\_English.pdf](http://fileservers.wavenetwork.org/trainingmanuals/Bridging_Gaps_MultiAgency_Cooperation_2006_English.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> G. Dima, I. F. Beldeanu, coord., *Violența Domestică: Intervenție coordonată a echipei multidisciplinare*, Manual pentru specialiști, Editura de Vest, Timișoara, 2015, p. 151.





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Currently, Law no. 217/2003 for preventing and combating domestic violence, in its consolidated and completed form, takes the legislation on domestic violence in Romania to the highest possible standard, implementing all the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.

The structure of existing social services and specialized services at national level contains **236 services**, of which: **152 social services for preventing and combating domestic violence** (146 for victims of domestic violence, 5 for family perpetrators) and **84 specialized services** (42 support groups and 42 vocational counselling offices).

In practice, however, much more than that is needed. There are currently **45 emergency reception centres for domestic violence victims**, **18 recovery centres for victims of domestic violence**, **42 sheltered housing for victims of domestic violence**, 41-day services. All these are still insufficient.

The data centralized by ANES based on the reports received from the different DGASPC, show that there are no specialized services (day services) in the field of domestic violence in the following counties: Bihor, Botoşani, Caraş-Severin, Harghita and Hunedoara.

In most parts of the country there are no shelters for victims of domestic violence and the possibility of their socio-residential reintegration is low.

In Cluj County there is only **1 shelter for victims of domestic violence** that serves the entire county (subordinated to DGASPC Cluj), **a centre for preventing and combating violence in families (DASM Cluj-Napoca)**, **a centre for research and prevention of domestic and social violence** (Babeş-Bolyai University) and **a counselling centre for preventing and combating domestic violence in the Cluj metropolitan area** (ADI-ZMC, within the Comunitatea VeDe), but **there aren't any centres for specialists working with domestic violence perpetrators**.

In working with domestic violence perpetrators, several institutions that try to provide services to this category are involved, at the request of the Court or at that of the person, voluntarily.

Thus, in Cluj-Napoca, support and guidance is being offered to domestic violence perpetrators within The Child and Family Protection Department (DASM) and sometimes such services are offered to perpetrators within the County Department for adults (DGASPC Cluj) and/or within the Probation Service, as they used to have rehabilitation programs, without specifically addressing family perpetrators.

According to the report on the activity carried out by the Public Ministry between 2017–2019, it is highlighted that in 2019, 1459 defendants were sent to trial (meaning 2.4% of the total number of those sent to trial) and that there were 1700 victims of domestic violence, of which 661 minors.





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Between January and October 2020, at national level, 7112 provisional protection orders were issued, meaning 8.2% more than those issued in the first 10 months of 2019. Out of their total, 7016 were issued at the request of victims of domestic violence, 60 at the request of other persons, 5 at the request of NGOs and 31 at the request of other institutions empowered in this regard.<sup>4</sup>

With the introduction of the provisional protection order, an increase in the number of protection orders issued can be observed, but the sanctioning and /or removal of perpetrators provides security to victims of domestic violence for a certain period of time but does not guarantee a change in the behaviour of perpetrators. For this to happen, a complex process is needed, by offering perpetrators specialized services.

In accordance with international practices, in addition to the general sanctions, perpetrators are required to attend programs aimed at making them accountable for their actions and at changing their violent behaviour. In Romania there is no such obligation, the measure being optional.

Statistical data on the number of cases in which the sentence was accompanied by the obligation of the convict to participate in a special treatment or counselling program to reduce violent behaviour are missing, but in practice it is known that the number of such cases is insignificant. This situation is being determined by objective factors as well (such as the lack of rehabilitation centres/ services and counselling and resocialization programs for family aggressors; probation bodies do not have the necessary resources to take over this task).

Currently, there are only a few requests from the Court in this regard. There are no legal constraints for the court to order perpetrators to attend rehabilitation services. Measures are needed to make perpetrators responsible for their own rehabilitation and for their social reintegration, to promote positive social relations, based on non-violent behaviour and acceptance of diversity.

It is also necessary that the specialized services be organized in the proximity of family perpetrators, in order to facilitate their access to these services and to maintain them, as much as possible, in their own living environment.

There are serious deficits regarding the rehabilitation of domestic perpetrators, due to the absence of specialized centres dedicated to them, which involve integrated and complementary activities such as: information activities, counselling, psychotherapy and other therapies, developed to increase the autonomy and the awareness of human social

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.politiaromana.ro/ro/stiri-si-media/comunicate/actiuni-pentru-prevenirea-si-combaterea-violentei-in-familie>.







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value and to develop the responsibility and the regain of the individual's social skills.

There are only 5 centres for specialists who work with perpetrators in Romania: The Assistance Centre for family perpetrators " O nouă șansă " (DGASMB Bucharest), The counselling centre for perpetrators (DGASPC Bucharest, sector 5), The counselling centre for perpetrators (DAS Baia Mare), The Domestic violence services complex, The Counselling centre for victims of domestic violence and The Counselling centre for perpetrators (DAS Timișoara) and The Counselling centre for the perpetrator (Cugir).

They offer psychological counselling, social counselling, counselling, and conflict mediation for the parties involved to overcome risk situations, counselling in the field of addictions, these being models of good practices regarding working with family perpetrators.

Thus, the number of the centres in our country is totally insufficient. However, the number of the beneficiaries of the centres intended for perpetrators is still low. This way, the obligation to attend such programs would lead to an increase in the number of counselled family perpetrators in the existing perpetrator counselling centres at national level.

At the same time, for the protection orders to be efficient, it is necessary that the family perpetrators be monitored by the Police, through electronic bracelets.

Thus, it is necessary to start applying measures for setting out the electronic surveillance system for perpetrators, according to the provisions of Law no. 174/2018 and the urgent adoption of the draft law on electronic bracelets and the allocation of funds which are necessary for these.

Regarding children who are victims of domestic violence, the results of a study conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), highlight the link between acts of violence suffered in the childhood and the risk of becoming victims of domestic violence/perpetrators themselves, once they reach adulthood.

To end the cycle of violence, it is crucial to support children who are experiencing situations of domestic violence or who are witnessing an event of domestic violence against their mothers.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, children can be directly affected by domestic violence by being subjected to a similar act of violence. Their personality can undergo profound changes as a result of domestic violence experienced in their childhood: boys are more likely to become perpetrators and girls to become victims. It is essential for them to receive support to deal

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<sup>5</sup> Information from TheWAVE Study, "Away from Violence: Guidelines for Setting up and Running a Refuge", 2004, pp. 10-14.





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with such experiences and understand that living together in terror and abuse is not normal.<sup>6</sup>

2.2. Problems/Needs which were identified within the research activity entitled Time for Change: Evidence based research for new practice approaches (WP 2), developed in the OSSPC project.

The Social and Medical Services Directorate of Cluj-Napoca (DASM), partner in the consortium that implements the "The Other Side of the Story: Perpetrators in Change" (OSSPC) project, organized, between 4-6 November 2020, three online focus groups with 30 participants, specialists in the field of domestic violence and in that of working with perpetrators.

The focus groups aimed to assess the need for programs for specialists to work with perpetrators to reduce the perpetuation of domestic violence in Romania, to understand the circumstances in which these programs operate, and to share good practice models and methods of working with perpetrators.

During the discussions, the following aspects were highlighted:

- **the need to develop and increase the number of prevention programs**, by introducing early education programs in schools on topics related to violence, bullying and preparation for couple life; increasing media involvement in changing the mentality on the phenomenon of domestic violence, decreasing tolerance regarding domestic violence, focusing on informing the community about existing solutions and services;
- **the need to implement the provisions of Law no. 217/2003 for preventing and combating domestic violence and to comply with the recommendations of the Istanbul Convention regarding the approach of the issues of domestic violence from a dual perspective, both from the victim and from the perpetrator** by: increasing the number of centres for victims of domestic violence and of sheltered apartments, setting up centres for working with perpetrators in each city, creating new positions in the organizational structures of public institutions, hiring staff and training specialists in the field of working with perpetrators, developing training programs in the field of domestic violence and of working with the perpetrators, developing clear procedures in working with perpetrators and integrated interventions of the specialists involved, working in multidisciplinary teams;

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.politiaromana.ro/ro/prevenire/violenta-domestica/efectele-violentei-domestice-asupra-copiilor>.







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- **the need to increase the responsibility of the main actors** (teachers/educators, doctors, priests, the police, social-work staff) **in recognizing/identifying and reporting, as early as possible, situations of abuse/domestic violence, strengthening collaboration protocols between various public and private institutions** (police, court, psychiatry, social services, nurseries/ kindergartens/schools, doctor's offices, day care centres for children, etc.) and the operationalization of existing services (mobile emergency response teams and/or monitoring the compliance with protection orders with the support of electronic bracelets);
- **the need to identify means of real monitoring of compliance with protection orders** and to develop dissuasive measures regarding the application of penalties for perpetrators who violate the protection order, in order to remove the insecurity of the victim and to avoid dramatic situations resulting in her death;
- **the need to increase the intervention capacity of professionals who come into contact with aggressors in situations of domestic violence;**
- **the existence of some legislative gaps** (lack of gradual punishments applied to perpetrators, the optional and accessory character of the disposition, by the court, of the obligation of perpetrators to attend a program of psychological counselling, the existence of some inconsistencies in the intervention in situations of child abuse and in the legal provisions regarding the situations of sexual acts with minors).

During the same research activity (within WP2), 5 interviews were conducted with family perpetrators and 20 questionnaires were applied to victims of domestic violence by each partner involved in the project.

Following the analysis of the data collected by DASM, the following aspects were highlighted:

- the services intended for family perpetrators /domestic violence victims are little known and poorly publicized in the community;
- victims of domestic violence end up living for several years in abusive relationships, until they ask for support;
- most of the responding domestic violence victims consider that things could have been different if their abusive partner had received help;
- most respondents consider that when their abusive partner was not violent, most of the times their relationship was fine;
- most perpetrators stated that they had experienced situations of abuse in the family of





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- origin;
- there are only a few situations in which perpetrators end up benefiting from specialized intervention;
  - voluntary access to rehabilitation services by perpetrators, as a result of them becoming aware of their inappropriate behaviour and of the need for specialized support, increases the success of their rehabilitation process;
  - in the improvement of support services for perpetrators, an important factor is the increase in the involvement of state institutions providing services (e.g. church, social services, police, etc.).

### 3. Beneficiaries affected by the effects of the policy recommendations

The beneficiaries affected by these policy recommendations coincide with the target groups the OSSPC project addresses directly: *the professionals providing services to victims of domestic violence* (social workers, psychologists, etc.); *relevant profile institutions* (local, county, national, governmental) *that provide support to victims of domestic violence and to perpetrators, women victims of domestic violence and their children*, as well as *perpetrators* by improving and developing specialized services to support them in order to gain awareness of the effects of their actions and to induce change and adopt adaptive behaviour.

One of the specific objectives of the OSSPC project is the professional training of 300 professionals, of which 60 professionals in Romania (social workers, psychologists, etc.) and improving their skills by acquiring the needed competences to work with family perpetrators towards their changing and their preventing the perpetuation of domestic violence.

In this context, by formulating policy recommendations on the necessity of training professionals in the field of domestic violence and developing services for working with perpetrators, we can talk about continuing the work which will be done in our project.

### 4. Public policy recommendations (proposed solutions to solve the identified problems)

The findings of the research carried out within the OSSPC project reiterate and strengthen the needs which were identified at national level and complement those which have already been provided in the National Strategy for 2017-2021.

The analysis of the current national situation of the services which are available to





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perpetrators highlights **the urgent need to develop social services to support them, useful working tools, accessible to all professionals who come in direct contact with perpetrators and that of intensive and multidisciplinary professional training for all professionals involved in working with domestic violence victims and with family perpetrators** on the specifics of domestic violence, on early identification of domestic violence situations and on reporting them to the competent institutions.

Developing social services which are appropriate to the needs of family perpetrators implies establishing a sufficient number of support centres for them at regional level, with specialized staff, facilitating their access and providing support: **through integrated services, rehabilitation treatments, psychological and psychiatric treatment, etc.**

The importance of multidisciplinary approach, of collaboration and of establishing good practices exchanges regarding the intervention and treatment programs for perpetrators, with institutions and specialists with expertise in the field are emphasized.

Thus, it is imperative to train specialists in working with perpetrators, to develop working procedures and, last but not least, to disseminate examples of good practice regarding work programs with perpetrators, for reaching a common vision at national level, to ensure a unified practice of responding to cases of domestic violence.

To reduce the phenomenon of domestic violence and to prevent recidivism, there is a fundamental need to hold the perpetrators accountable by establishing an integrated institutional framework and by adopting specific policies and measures, such as: setting up an operational electronic surveillance system for perpetrators and assuring the functioning of existing services/ developing them in each city (mobile emergency response team), immediate resolution of complaints in domestic violence cases, divorce cases with a history of domestic violence, the introduction of mandatory court orders to oblige all family perpetrators to attend rehabilitation services, monitoring compliance with the court's order and sanctioning the non-compliance.

At the same time, there is a need to increase the level of community involvement in identifying and reporting cases of domestic violence to the competent institutions, as well as a need to launch national campaigns (information, awareness and sensitization) on combatting any type of verbal, psychological or physical violence, in the media, in society and in schools, by disseminating mandatory social messages regarding existing social services/sanctions for perpetrators, accompanying the presentation of domestic violence acts.





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No.	Recommendations	Proposed solutions	Institutions with responsibilities in implementing the recommendations
I	<b><i>Developing social services which are appropriate to the identified needs and which will facilitate access and quality support to family perpetrators</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ establishing support centres for family perpetrators at regional level, allocating financial, material and human resources which will assure their functioning;</li> <li>➤ multidisciplinary approach, providing integrated services and decentralization/ expansion of the services-network, rehabilitation treatments, psychological and psychiatric treatment;</li> <li>➤ assuring the functioning of existing services/ developing them in each city (mobile emergency response team) ;</li> <li>➤ creating a free telephone line for perpetrators.</li> </ul>	Local councils, County councils, Local Public Social Services, County Public Social Services, police, local police, prosecutor's office, court, psychotherapy offices psychiatric hospitals, emergency units, family medicine offices, educational units, church.
II	<b><i>Increasing the intervention capacity of professionals who come into direct contact with perpetrators in domestic violence situations.</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ professional training for specialists in working with perpetrators;</li> <li>➤ developing social services which are appropriate to the needs of family perpetrators, developing useful working tools, accessible to all professionals who come into direct contact with perpetrators and professional training of specialists from different fields (social work, local administration, justice, health, education, etc.);</li> </ul>	ANES, MMPS, ANDPDCA, MAI, The Health Ministry, The Ministry for Development, Public works and Administration The Ministry for Education and Research, The Ministry of Justice –The National Probation





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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ intensive and multidisciplinary training for police officers, prosecutors, judges and lawyers on the specifics of domestic violence and on the specifics of working with perpetrators;</li> <li>➤ improving the skills of professionals in the field by ensuring continuous quality training (the training should include sessions on identifying and challenging prejudices);</li> <li>➤ elaborating a unitary methodology and a set of standardized tools for working with perpetrators.</li> </ul>	<p>Department, Local councils, County councils, Local Public Social Services, County Public Social Services, police, local police, prosecutor's office, court, psychotherapy offices psychiatric hospitals, emergency units, family medicine offices, educational units, church.</p>
<p><b>III</b></p>	<p><b><i>Application of the provisions of Law no. 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence and increasing the responsibility of perpetrators by applying the sanctions provided by law.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the introduction of a mandatory court order to oblige all family perpetrators to attend rehabilitation services, monitoring their compliance with the court's order and sanctioning non-compliance;</li> <li>➤ setting up an operational electronic surveillance system for perpetrators;</li> <li>➤ assuring the functioning of existing services/ developing them in each city (mobile emergency response team);</li> <li>➤ immediate resolution of complaints in domestic violence cases, divorce cases with a history of domestic violence;</li> <li>➤ identification of means of real monitoring of the compliance with the protection orders;</li> </ul>	<p>The Government of Romania, ANES, MMPS, ANDPDCA, MAI, The Health Ministry, The Ministry for Development, Public works and Administration, The Ministry for Education and Research, The Ministry of Justice – National Probation Department.</p>







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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ introducing gradual punishments for family perpetrators;</li> <li>➤ creating a national information system for the registration and reporting of family perpetrators.</li> </ul>	
<b>IV</b>	<b><i>Increasing the number of prevention, awareness and information programs.</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ launching national campaigns (information, awareness and sensitization) on combatting domestic violence;</li> <li>➤ assuring professional services for the rehabilitation of perpetrators;</li> <li>➤ active community involvement in identifying and reporting cases of domestic violence to the competent institutions;</li> <li>➤ compulsory introduction of early education programs in schools on topics related to domestic violence, sex education, bullying and preparing young people for married life;</li> <li>➤ media messages on the importance of changing violent behaviour and of services for perpetrators.</li> </ul>	ANES, MMPS, ANDPDCA, MAI, The Health Ministry, The Ministry for Development, Public works and Administration, The Ministry for Education and Research, The Ministry of Justice – National Probation Department mass-media, the community.
<b>V</b>	<b><i>Increasing the responsibility of central public authorities with responsibilities in preventing and combating domestic violence.</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ developing the collaboration relations between internal partners and between Romania and the states/international bodies involved in preventing and combating domestic violence, in order to disseminate good practice models and to align the services at international level;</li> <li>➤ ensuring permanent funding for the development of rehabilitation</li> </ul>	ANES, MMPS, ANDPDCA, MAI, The Health Ministry  The Ministry for Development, Public works and Administration  The Ministry for Education and Research,







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		<p>services for perpetrators, hiring sufficient staff, training for specialists in the field, providing updated information materials (posters, leaflets) with services for perpetrators;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ conducting a national analysis on achieving the objectives proposed by the National Strategy on Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence for 2018-2021 and by the Operational Plan on Implementing the National Strategy on Promoting Equal Opportunities between Women and Men and preventing and combating domestic violence 2018-2021 and formulating new directives.</li> </ul>	<p>The Ministry of Justice –The National Probation Department</p>
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#### 4.1. Public policy recommendations at local level

At local level we recommend:

- establishing support centres for family perpetrators in cities;
- hiring specialized staff (social worker, psychologist, psycho-therapist, doctor, lawyer) and assuring the equipment necessary for its proper functioning;
- elaborating a unitary methodology and a set of standardized tools for working with family perpetrators;
- developing collaboration partnerships with the Police, the Psychiatric Clinic, the Court, the Prosecutor's Office, educational units, religious cult units, NGOs;
- organizing professional training courses for specialists in the field for working with family perpetrators;
- setting up a mobile intervention team for situations of domestic violence, by hiring specialized personnel to intervene in all such situations;





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- developing a database on perpetrators and monitoring the compliance with protection orders by using electronic bracelets and implementing legal sanctions in case of non-compliance;
- making referrals by the Court of all perpetrators to rehabilitation services in order to prevent recidivism, verifying the compliance with the court's provisions and sanctioning perpetrators in case of non-compliance;
- launching annual school campaigns on domestic violence, on the effects of domestic violence and existing solutions;
- introducing sexual education in the school curricula;
- launching awareness and information campaigns on addressing domestic violence in the local media from the perspective of family perpetrators and the services intended for them.

#### 4.2. Public policy recommendations at county/regional level:

At county/regional level we recommend:

- establishing a support centre for family perpetrators in each region/county;
- hiring specialized staff (social worker, psychologist, psycho-therapist, doctor, lawyer) and assuring the equipment necessary for its proper functioning;
- elaborating a unitary methodology and a set of standardized tools for working with family perpetrators;
- developing collaboration partnerships with the Police, the Psychiatric Clinic, the Court, the Prosecutor's Office, educational units, religious cult units, NGOs;
- organizing professional training courses for specialists in the field for working with family perpetrators;
- setting up a mobile intervention team for situations of domestic violence, by hiring specialized personnel to intervene in all such situations;
- developing a database on perpetrators and monitoring the compliance with protection orders by using electronic bracelets and implementing legal sanctions in case of non-compliance;
- making referrals by the Court of all perpetrators to rehabilitation services in order to prevent recidivism, verifying the compliance with the court's provisions and sanctioning perpetrators in case of non-compliance;
- launching annual school campaigns on domestic violence, on the effects of domestic violence and existing solutions;





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- introducing sexual education in the school curricula;
- launching awareness and information campaigns on addressing domestic violence in the local media from the perspective of family perpetrators and the services intended for them.

#### 4.3. Public policy recommendations at national level

At national level, additional to the policy recommendations we have formulated for the local and county/regional level, we recommend:

- developing the collaboration relations between internal partners and between Romania and the states or international bodies involved in preventing and combating domestic violence, in order to disseminate good practice models and to align the services at international level;
- ensuring permanent funding for developing rehabilitation services for perpetrators, hiring sufficient staff, training of specialists in the field, providing updated information materials (posters, leaflets) with services for family perpetrators;
- conducting a national analysis on achieving the objectives proposed by the National Strategy on Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence for 2018-2021 and by the Operational Plan on Implementing the National Strategy on Promoting Equal Opportunities between Women and Men and preventing and combating domestic violence 2018-2021 and formulating new directives.

#### 4.4. Justification of recommendations

Starting from the idea highlighted in the research conducted within the OSSPC project, namely that the number of domestic perpetrators is equal to the number of victims of domestic violence, we rely on a dual approach of the phenomenon of domestic violence, by providing integrated services to victims of domestic violence and to family perpetrators as well, in order to change their violent behaviours.

This way, the number of situations in which the perpetrators who get out of abusive relationships would find a new potential victim and/or would repeat the aggressive behaviour (if the victim would return to the perpetrator) as practice shows, most of the time, would decrease.





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At the same time, the number of children subjected to trauma as a result of experiencing domestic violence in the family could become considerably lower, as well as the number of children who inherit aggressive behaviour, by learning it in the family.

By formulating these policy recommendations, we hope that as many specialists as possible will benefit from professional training in the field and thus, the increase of the quality of their work with family perpetrators and of the support services offered to them will be noticed.

At the same time, the effects of these recommendations will have repercussions on specialists who provide services to victims of domestic violence and to family perpetrators, as well as on all professionals who, by the nature of their work, have duties or interact with potential domestic violence victims or family perpetrators (family doctors, medical staff, police officers, teachers, prosecutors, judges, social workers, psychologists, etc.), by increasing the level of awareness of the scale of the phenomenon of domestic violence, by increasing the responsibility of each entity (state, institution, specialists, community) involved in the process of preventing and combating this phenomenon, by developing and improving the skills of specialists in the field, by increasing the number of services and, at the same time, the number of professionals working in the field of domestic violence.

Proportionally to these increases, the increase in the number of beneficiaries (domestic violence victims and family perpetrators) who will access quality services is anticipated. Conversely, in proportion to the increase in the work capacity of specialists with this category and the services offered to family perpetrators, the aim is to reduce the number of relapses in terms of violent behaviour, but also to reduce the number of domestic violence situations.

## 5. Authorities that have the capacity to initiate / promote / implement / support public policy recommendations

### 5.1. Authorities that have the capacity to initiate / promote / implement / support public policy recommendations at local/county level

- County Councils
- County Public Social Services (DGASPC)
- County Police Inspectorates
- Local Councils





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- Local Public Social Services (SPAS)
- Local Police
- The Prosecutor's Office
- Universities
- Accredited private service providers (NGOs, foundations), representing an alternative to the services received in the state system
- Medical and sanitary units in the community (Emergency Units, Family Medicine Offices)
- Inter-institutional working group on domestic violence
- Educational units
- Religious worship units
- Community members

## 5.2. Authorities that have the capacity to initiate / promote / implement / support public policy recommendations at national level

- The National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (ANES)
- The Ministry for Labour and Social Protection (MMPS)
- The National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (ANDPDCA)
- The Ministry for Internal Affairs (MAI)
- The Health Ministry
- The Ministry for Development, Public works and Administration
- The Ministry for Education and Research
- The Ministry of Justice – National Probation Department





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