



Victim Safety-Oriented Work with Perpetrators in Austria

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The Domestic Violence Intervention Centre Vienna

- ... is a victim support institution officially recognised by the State, offering pro-active supportive counselling for victims of domestic violence (mainly women and children) and coordination of measures to prevent violence.
- Austrian Federal Act on Protection against Domestic Violence (1997)
 - **6.185 clients** in 2017: most of them referred to the Intervention Centre by the police in the context of the emergency barring order

Anti-Violence Programme Vienna (since 1999) – *An Overview*

- Carried out in **partnership** between Intervention Centre Vienna and Men`s Centre Vienna
- Based on **international standards**
- **Victim protection** is at the centre
- **Objectives:** changing men`s violent behaviour with the aim of taking responsibility and stopping all forms of violence; offering protection and empowering support to the victim and the children; promoting gender equality and partnership between women and men
- **Referrals:** criminal court/public prosecutor, family court, youth welfare service, self-referral
- **No secure funding** for perpetrator training

Anti-Violence Programme Vienna - *Structure*

PERPETRATOR TRAINING

(Men`s Centre Vienna)

- Referral and first contact
- Clearing phase: 1) diagnostic assessment; 2) Clearing group (assessment phase)
- Training groups (min. 32 sessions)
- Support in crisis situations (risk of repeat violence)

VICTIM(S) SUPPORT

(Intervention Centre Vienna)

- Contacting the (ex)partner and building a relationship of trust
- Information; assessing situation
- Ongoing danger assessment + safety planning
- Holistic support before, during and after the training, including crisis intervention in event of renewed violence

JOINT MANAGMENT + COOPERATION

- Weekly exchange of information after training sessions
- Monthly meetings to discuss progress and setbacks
- Joint risk assessment
- Crisis intervention measures to prevent re-offending
- Joint management meetings on the running of the programme

Anti-Violence Programme Vienna – *Statistics 2017*

■ **157 participants** in the programme in 2017

- ▶ 79 did not attend the programme after the clearing phase (mostly lack of motivation)
- ▶ 20 dropped out during the programme
- ▶ 29 completed the programme in 2017
- ▶ 29 were still attending the programme at the end of 2017

■ **Conclusion:**

- > only about 2-3% of our perpetrators contacted the programme
- > only 0,5% completed it
- > main reasons: lack of motivation to participate voluntarily, lack of referrals by the justice system

National Working Group on Victim-Safety Oriented Work with Perpetrators (since 2012) – *An Overview*

- **Network of expert organizations:** Intervention Centres, Women`s Shelters, Men`s Counselling Centres, Probation Service (currently 22 members)
- 2 annual **meetings**; sub-group meetings
- **Objectives:** development and enhancement of victim-safety oriented work with perpetrators in Austria; establishment and implementation of standards in line with the Istanbul Convention (art. 16)
- **Networking + information exchange** with relevant authorities (justice system, youth welfare service...)
- **Funded** by ministries (small grant of € 7.000)

National Working Group on Victim-Safety Oriented Work with Perpetrators – *Achievements*

- **Mapping** on perpetrator services + programmes in Austria
- **Standards and Guidelines**; Information **folder**
- **Cooperation agreement** between national probation service and victim support services
- **Current work on:** standardization of data collection; lack of referrals to perpetrator programmes; differing concepts of victim-safety oriented WWP among members
- Involvement at **European level** (WWP EN)

Challenges

- **Lack of court/authority referrals** to perpetrator programmes (lack of accountability for perpetrators in the criminal justice system; impunity)
- **Underreported** violence against women
- Requirement of **perpetrator`s consent** to cooperation and information exchange
- **No working programmes** in many provinces
- **Tension:** differing concepts of victim-safety oriented WWP
- Lack of **data**
- Lack of **funding** (e.g. AVP only in German language)

Recommendations

- Effective measures to guarantee effective **prosecution and punishment**, incl. training for public prosecutors and judges
- Ensure **court/authority referrals** of perpetrators to programmes which fulfill the standards of the Istanbul Convention
- Cooperation and information exchange must not depend on the consent of the perpetrator
- **Recommendations GREVIO** Baseline Evaluation Report Austria: expansion of victim-safety oriented WWP; concerns for data protection of perpetrators should not supersede the rights of victims to protection from violence
- Ensure collection of **minimum data** according to art. 11 of the Istanbul Convention
- Ensure adequate and sustainable (long-term) **funding** for victim-safety oriented perpetrator programmes (in all 9 provinces)
- **Increase understanding** of the situation of victims

Thank you for your attention!



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