

Work Package 3- Skills-based Guidebook to prevent young people victimization

Common Report



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Introduction

This Common Report, developed by partners from **Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Italy and Germany** provides a holistic examination of **domestic violence** and its **impact on young people** in these five European countries. The report addresses three key areas: the legal situation, the current state of domestic violence and access to services and resources for victims. In addition, the report includes the results of a questionnaire which was handed out to assess public awareness and experiences with domestic violence.

Each country provides a detailed analysis of its **legislative framework** on domestic violence and child protection. The description includes the main laws adopted to prevent and combat domestic violence, highlighting significant legal measures and their evolution over time. This section also reviews the various ongoing programmes, initiatives and projects aimed at preventing domestic violence and supporting victims. These efforts reflect countries' commitment to adhere to international standards and improve national responses to domestic violence.

The report provides significant statistics and examples of domestic violence incidents involving young people, providing insight into the prevalence and scope of the problem in each country. Recent trends and changes in the dynamics of domestic violence are analysed to understand the changing landscape. Particular attention is given to the **effects of domestic violence on young victims**, including the impact on mental health, school achievement and social relationships. In addition, the report explores the indirect effects on children and other family members who, although not direct victims, are significantly affected by violence. It also discusses the challenges each country faces in addressing domestic violence, such as social attitudes, resource constraints and law enforcement problems.

The **access to services and resources** examines the services available to victims of domestic violence, including counselling, legal aid and shelter services. The report assesses the accessibility of these services, identifying barriers such as geographical, financial, cultural and economic factors that prevent victims from getting the support they need. It also assesses the effectiveness of these services, highlighting gaps in support and areas for improvement to better assist victims and their families.

The final part is focused on the **analysis of questionnaires** distributed to gather insights into public awareness and personal experiences related to domestic violence. It has been distributed to young people aged between 13 and 24, and their experiences of domestic violence.

Regulatory situation

Each partner has focused on the analysis of legislative framework with the description of the main laws regarding the topic of study (e.g., domestic violence laws, child protection laws, etc.); and an overview of current programs, initiatives, projects aimed at preventing and combating domestic violence. Each country has tailored its laws and initiatives to meet its specific needs while aligning with international standards like the Istanbul Convention.

Spain

In Spain, there is no law against domestic violence as such: it is addressed through various articles in the Spanish Penal Code, treating it as an aggravating factor in crimes such as threats, coercion, and insults. Specific legislation, such as Organic **Law 1/2004** on Comprehensive Protection Measures against Gender Violence, provides a framework for protecting women from violence. This law includes provisions for physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence within domestic settings and establishes measures such as civil protection orders and initiatives to combat online harassment and sexism.

The Spanish legal system does not have a specific law against domestic violence but treats it as an aggravating factor in various criminal offenses. For example, mild threats, coercion, insults, and slight humiliation are penalized with different severity depending on the presence of weapons or dangerous instruments.

Gender violence, defined as violence against women for the simple fact of being women, is addressed by state-level laws and regional laws such as the **Law 7/2012** of the Valencian Community. These laws cover a wide range of violence, including sexual assaults, forced prostitution, employment discrimination, and female genital mutilation.

Portugal

Portugal has developed a robust legal framework to address domestic violence **Law No.112/2009** systematically criminalizes all forms of domestic violence and has undergone several revisions to enhance its effectiveness. Significant amendments include **Law No.19/2013**, which strengthened protection measures for victims, and **Law No.129/2015**, which improved the safeguard of victims. The latest major change was made by **Law No.54/2020**, which further enhanced protection measures for victims.

Child protection laws in Portugal include **Law No.147/99**, which has been amended multiple times to strengthen the legal provisions for protecting children from violence. Additional laws like **Law No.112/2009** and **Law No.144/2015** also address the protection of children within the framework of handling domestic violence cases.

It points out that the Victim's Statute in Portuguese law is one more element of the measures concerning domestic violence and a complete set of the legal provisions for the protection and assistance of the victims. This statute is subject to several daunting laws and legislative amendments aimed at furthering and expanding the provisions of the availability of protection to victims: **Law No.57/2021** elaborated the protection of domestic violence victims to cover children and young people in violent environments.

In response to the urgent need to protect victims of domestic violence, Portugal has established a solid National Support Network for Domestic Violence Victims. This network consists of various organizations, programs, and projects dedicated to providing support to those affected by domestic violence.

The primary organization in Portugal supporting victims is the APAV (Portuguese Association for Victim Support). APAV offers a range of essential services including counselling, legal assistance, emergency shelters, a helpline, and awareness and education programs. The counselling services help victims process their experiences and seek assistance, while legal advice ensures their rights are protected. Emergency shelters provide safe accommodation, and the helpline offers immediate support and guidance.

The *Safe School Program*, operational since 1992, is a nationwide initiative aimed at ensuring the safety of the school environment. It prevents risk behaviours and reduces acts of insecurity in schools by involving security forces in its implementation.

The *Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)* is the leading governmental body at the national level concerning gender equality and domestic violence. CIG's roles include policy-making, funding organizations working with survivors, and providing training programs for professionals in various sectors to enhance their capacity to support victims.

Shelter houses in Portugal offer safe housing and comprehensive support services, including counselling, legal assistance, and medical services. They also provide reintegration programs to help victims restart their lives by finding homes, jobs, and schools.

Healthcare professionals play a critical role in supporting victims by providing immediate medical care, long-term psychological support, and referrals to other necessary services.

Portuguese law enforcement agencies are vital in protecting victims through rapid response to incidents, issuing and enforcing protection orders, and thorough investigation and prosecution of perpetrators.

Numerous NGOs partner with the government to offer additional support services. Organizations such as the Association of Women Against Violence (AMCV), CasaQui, Plano

i, UMAR - Women's Union Alternative and Response, and Poplar House specialize in counselling, legal advocacy, community outreach, and policy advocacy.

Government initiatives, such as the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination (2018-2030) known as "Portugal + Igual," include campaigns for prevention, training programs for professionals, and comprehensive support services for victims. Specialized police units are trained to handle domestic violence cases with sensitivity and expertise.

The government has also taken steps to address the needs of children who witness domestic violence. Specialist child protection services focus on their safety and welfare, educational programs teach them about healthy relationships, and counselling services help them cope with the trauma they have experienced.

The *National Support Network for Victims of Domestic Violence* (RNAVVD) is a comprehensive network providing support and shelter, involving social, health, legal, and security services. This initiative emphasizes interagency collaboration, victim-centred approaches, and continuous monitoring and evaluation to refine response strategies and support services.

Portugal has developed a multi-faceted approach to support victims of domestic violence, focusing on safety, welfare, and empowerment. Despite significant progress, challenges remain, and continuous efforts are necessary to ensure comprehensive support and protection for all victims.

Cyprus

Cyprus has implemented a comprehensive legal framework to address domestic violence and violence against women. The Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family **Law (L.119(I)/2000)** specifically prohibits acts of violence within families. In 2021, the country enacted the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence Law (**VAW Law 2021**), which further defines and criminalizes various forms of violence, including psychological, sexual, and economic violence, as well as the dissemination of pornographic content. The law also addresses the incitement of children to commit offenses.

Cyprus has also taken steps to address harassment and stalking through **the Protection from Harassment and Stalking Law (2021)** and has criminalized sexism and online sexism with the **Combating of Sexism and Online Sexism Law (2020)**. Additionally, the **National Action Plans for Equality between Men and Women (2019-2023)** prioritize combating gender-based violence. The country ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2017, which came into force in 2018, reinforcing its commitment to combating violence against women.

Initiatives to support victims include SPAVO (Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family), which provides support, education, and services such as the woman's house and the Proteas program for abusers and Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, whose aim is to research and implement project about domestic violence, as TRUST project.

Italy

Italy's approach to addressing domestic violence has evolved significantly over the years. The country's legal framework includes **Law No.66/1996**, which addresses sexual violence and provides special protection for minors. **Law No.154/2001** introduced specific precautionary measures at both criminal and civil levels to protect victims of domestic violence.

Italy's legislation is aligned with the Istanbul Convention (2011), recognizing violence against women as a form of human rights violation and discrimination. **Legislative Decree No. 212/2015**, known as the "Manifesto of Victims' Rights," focuses on the rights, assistance, and protection of crime victims. The "Code Red" law, which came into force in 2019, aimed to expedite the reporting and investigation of gender-based crimes, extending the time frame for reporting sexual assaults and introducing new offenses like revenge porn, coercion into marriage, and deformation of someone's body through permanent injuries.

Italy is a signatory to several international conventions aimed at protecting children and combating domestic violence, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Istanbul Convention.

A step forward in the cooperation between institutions and the forces of law and order has been taken with the inter-force application **SCUDO**, which supports the management of 'emergency response' activities to prevent and combat phenomena related to domestic or gender-based violence. The application is mainly intended for operators of the State Police and Carabinieri Corps engaged in territorial control services. SCUDO makes available a wealth of information on existing precedents in gender-based conflicts, which is enriched and updated with each intervention of the territorial control division

Germany

Germany has a comprehensive legislative framework to combat domestic violence. The **Protection Against Violence Act (GewSchG)**, which came into effect in 2002, allows victims to obtain civil protection orders that require perpetrators to leave the shared home and stay away from the victim. The act also permits the allocation of the shared residence to the victim and the prohibition of contact by the perpetrator.

The German Criminal Code (StGB) includes various sections that address domestic violence:

- Section 223 covers physical abuse.
- Section 224 addresses dangerous assault, including aggravated forms of assault.
- Section 225 specifically deals with abuse within family settings or by individuals in positions of trust.
- Section 238 prohibits stalking.
- Section 240 addresses coercion, including within intimate relationships.
- Section 177 includes provisions for prosecuting sexual violence within relationships.

Germany also has child protection laws such as the **Child and Youth Welfare Act (KJHG)** and the Act to Combat Sexual Violence and Exploitation of Children, which enhance penalties and protection mechanisms against sexual violence and exploitation of children.

Federal initiatives in Germany include public awareness campaigns, support and counselling services, and specialized training for professionals. Programs like the national hotline for violence against women and numerous women's shelters provide crucial support for victims. Educational efforts in schools and communities aim to promote healthy relationships and prevent violence.

Current situation

A detailed overview of the current situation regarding domestic violence (DV) in the partner countries, focusing on relevant statistics, recent trends, effects on youth victims, and the challenges faced in addressing DV, has been developed.

Spain

The statistics from the Government Delegation against Gender Violence highlight a severe situation: since 2023, the **number of women murdered due to gender violence has amounted to 1271**. In 2024 alone, there were 27 women fatalities due to domestic violence, with detailed data showing the age distribution of these victims and their alleged aggressors. Minor fatalities in cases of gender violence against their mothers from 2013 to 2024 amounted to 62.

Recent trends indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased gender-based violence through mechanisms such as isolation, limited escape opportunities, and restricted access to healthcare. The State Pact against Gender Violence established in 2017, which includes comprehensive measures across various sectors, resulted from intense parliamentary negotiations. This Pact involves influencing all areas of society and encompasses 214 measures from the Congress of Deputies and 267 measures from the Senate, consolidated into a total of 292 measures structured into ten lines of action. These measures address awareness and prevention, improving institutional response, assistance and protection for victims, protection of minors, training of different agents, statistical monitoring, recommendations to public administrations and other institutions, attention to other forms of violence against women, economic commitment, and monitoring of the pact. The measures aim to raise awareness, enhance coordination and resource use, improve assistance and protection for victims, intensify protection for minors, promote specialized training for professionals, ensure reliable data collection, and provide financial support.

The impact of domestic violence on women's health is profound, influencing all aspects of their lives, including their physical, mental, and social well-being, as well as that of their children. Violence against women can be conceptualized as a significant risk factor for poor health, translating into a wide range of negative health outcomes. These consequences create synergies that exacerbate the effects on women's health and highlight the benefits of preventive activities. Different areas of the health system, such as emergency services, mental health services, prenatal consultations, and sexually transmitted disease clinics, play crucial roles in providing necessary support to women in need.

Children who are victims or witnesses of gender violence experience a wide array of negative outcomes in physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and social domains. Physically, children may experience stunted growth, sleeping and eating difficulties, regressions, reduced motor skills, psychosomatic symptoms like eczema or asthma, and loss of appetite. Emotionally, they may suffer from anxiety, depression, isolation, low self-esteem, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Cognitively, children may have language and developmental delays, and academic performance can be significantly impaired. Behaviourally, they may exhibit aggression, cruelty to animals, tantrums, disinhibitions, immaturity, delinquency, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, and substance dependencies. Socially, affected children may have poor social skills, withdraw from interactions, face rejection, and show a lack of empathy or aggressive, defiant behaviour.

The extent of the impact of violence on children is influenced by factors such as age, gender, severity and duration of exposure to violence, family context, type of social intervention, and the accumulation of other stressors. One of the longer-term effects is the generational transmission of violence, where children exposed to violence in the family context may develop a learning model that normalizes violent behaviour. Studies indicate that these children are more likely to become abusers or victims of gender violence in adulthood. Children exposed to gender violence may develop harmful beliefs and values, such as the notion that men are superior and women must obey them, or that hitting women is justified and without consequences. These children often do not learn appropriate strategies for interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, flexibility, dialogue, or respect, reinforcing the cycle of violence.

Portugal

Domestic violence has significantly influenced social life in Portugal in recent years. According to the Ministry of Justice and the National Statistics Institute, thousands of cases are reported annually. Between 2021 and 2023, the Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV) **recorded 64,899 crimes of domestic violence**, with 25,240 female victims (81.1%) and 5,372 male victims (17.3%). Most victims were between 36 and 45 years old, and a substantial portion experienced continued victimization (54.5%). The European Institute for Gender Equality reports that approximately 24% of women in Portugal have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner at some point in their lives.

Domestic violence cases in Portugal vary, with the most reported incidents involving threats and coercive control (19,335 cases). Physical violence accounts for 16,926 cases, and libel and defamation for 16,142 cases. Less frequently reported are psychological violence (1,218 cases) and sexual violence (732 cases). These different forms underscore

the complexity of domestic violence, requiring comprehensive strategies for prevention, protection, and support for all victims.

Domestic violence in Portugal significantly affects youth, either directly or indirectly. Many children and young people are exposed to domestic violence at home, leaving a damaging impact on their psychological and emotional development. In 2022, around 5,000 cases of domestic violence involved children as either direct victims or witnesses. Between 2022 and 2023, APAV recorded 10,271 crimes and other forms of violence committed against children and young people, with 6,432 (62.6%) being domestic violence crimes and 3,116 (30.3%) sexual crimes. During this period, APAV supported 5,661 child and young victims, reflecting an 18.2% increase from 2022 to 2023.

Youth victims of domestic violence suffer severe psychological consequences, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD. They may also face learning difficulties, behavioural issues, and impaired relationships later in life. The trauma can interfere with their psychological growth and well-being, leading to lower academic achievement, increased absenteeism, and higher dropout rates. Socially, these children may have trust issues, struggle to form and maintain friendships, and exhibit aggressiveness, leading to isolation and feelings of loneliness and insecurity.

The impact of domestic violence extends beyond the direct victims to other family members, including siblings and extended family. Emotional distress is common among non-direct victims, creating an atmosphere of fear, guilt, and anger. Financial burdens also increase due to legal expenses, medical care, and counselling costs, exacerbated by loss of earnings due to court proceedings or therapy. These psychological and economic impacts complicate the family's situation, necessitating a multifaceted approach to support and rebuild their lives.

Addressing domestic violence in Portugal faces several challenges:

1. Geographic Barriers: Victims in rural and remote areas have limited access to basic services like shelters, support services, and legal aid, making escape and safety more elusive.
2. Cultural Stigma: Societal attitudes and cultural norms can discourage victims from coming forward due to shame, guilt, or fear of judgment, especially in communities with traditional views on gender roles and family privacy.
3. Resource Limitations: A significant challenge is the lack of funds and resources required to provide support services and shelters. Limited budgets lead to long waitlists for shelters, counselling, and legal services, and a lack of outreach programs, leaving many victims without support.

Recent years have seen an increase in reported cases of domestic violence, likely due to growing public awareness from educational campaigns and media coverage. Improved

support services, such as hotlines, shelters, and legal aid, have also contributed to higher reporting rates. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted domestic violence, with incidents increasing during lockdowns due to economic stress and uncertainty. Movement restrictions trapped many victims with their abusers, highlighting the need for robust support systems and emergency response mechanisms during crises.

Special support is provided to young victims or witnesses of domestic violence in Portugal, including counselling and therapy. Educational programs raise awareness about domestic violence and its negative consequences, promoting healthy relationships. Between 2022 and 2023, APAV organized 1,887 awareness events, involving 3,970 hours and 42,071 participants, significantly contributing to the prevention of domestic violence and mitigating its impact on the young generation.

Cyprus

In Cyprus, data collection on domestic violence is limited, with available data indicating a significant increase in domestic violence cases in recent years. According to the Association for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (COVID), **cases increased by 33% in 2021** compared to 2020 and by 106% compared to 2019. Most victims are women, and only 25% of cases are reported. The European Institute for Gender Equality highlights a lack of comparable EU-wide data for Cyprus.

The types of domestic violence reported include sexual, bodily, and psychological violence, with bodily violence being the most prevalent. The effects of domestic violence in Cyprus include neglect of self-care, abandonment of daily tasks, difficulties in school, post-traumatic stress, and anxiety. Challenges in addressing domestic violence include language barriers for refugees and asylum seekers, lack of prevention awareness, and insufficient awareness among health professionals.

Italy

In 2023, the police identified **43,759 individuals as victims of suspected gender or domestic violence**. Of these, 43.8% were identified as presumed victims, 40.5% as presumed perpetrators, and 14.9% as witnesses. In 0.9% of cases, the person was absent, meaning neither perpetrators nor victims were identified because they were not present. Among the 19,152 suspected victims, 13,793 were female, constituting 72% of the total, with an average age of 41 years. In over 90% of cases, the suspected perpetrator was someone within the woman's close and familiar circle, such as a spouse, cohabiting partner, relative, or family member. In 7% of cases, the perpetrator was an acquaintance, friend, or colleague, and only 1.5% of cases involved a perpetrator completely unknown to the victim.

In 61.5% of cases, the perpetrator had a sentimental relationship with the victim, either current or former. Specifically, in 43.2% of cases, the perpetrator was a spouse or cohabiting partner, and in 18.3% of cases, a partner or ex-partner. Additionally, in two out of five (42%) cases of violence against women by perpetrators in relationships, minors were also cohabiting.

Minors are often direct victims of domestic violence. In 2023, there were 2,124 suspected child victims, including 1,086 females and 1,036 males. Among these children, 34% were between 0 and 6 years old, 18% were between 7 and 10 years old, and the remaining 48% were between 11 and 17 years old. The age at which children experience violence, the nature and frequency of the violence, and the presence or absence of protective factors significantly influence the aftermath of these traumatic events. The younger the children and the more severe the violent events, the more severe and frequent the effects on their psychophysical development and personality structure.

Children who witness intra-family violence may experience direct bodily harm if they become entangled in the conflict while trying to protect their mother. The development of their personality is also affected by the mother's aggressiveness, which becomes a risk factor for the child's psychophysical health. These children often live in a state of intense stress and uncertainty, experiencing daily suffering that goes unnoticed by their parents. This lack of recognition can lead to feelings of evaluation, missed recognition, and loss of trust in adults' ability to care for them. As a result, they may become aggressive, resentful, and helpless.

The effects of domestic violence on children and teenagers are extensive, impacting their psychological, emotional, social, and physical domains. Common consequences include depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, aggression, agitation, diminished social and relational skills, impaired motor abilities, changes in sleep patterns, diminished empathic abilities, regressive behaviours, self-harm tendencies, eating disorders, substance abuse, and poor academic performance linked to learning difficulties.

As these children grow older, the trauma continues to affect them, particularly during sensitive stages like adolescence. Teenagers who have internalized the idea that violence is acceptable in relationships are at risk of behaving destructively towards their partners without taking responsibility for their actions. Girls who witness parental violence may be more likely to accept abusive or oppressive relationships in the future. These children often develop adult-like behaviours, such as nurturing and protecting the abused parent, leading to role reversals where they take care of the adult.

The consequences of violence in close relationships between parents also affect gender-specific behaviours. Boys may learn to disdain women, adopting gender stereotypes and devaluing attitudes towards men who do not conform to the ideal of a strong, virile, and powerful man. They may perceive women as inferior and subject to control and

domination, justified through violence. Girls, identifying with their mothers, may develop low self-esteem, perceive themselves as fragile and worthless, and seek unequal relationships involving submission. Both genders learn relational models where aggression and violence are justified as expressions of affection and power.

Germany

According to data provided by the Bundeskriminalamt's (BKA) "Lagebild Häusliche Gewalt" report, Germany recorded 256,276 victims of domestic violence in 2023, marking a 6.5% increase from the previous year. Of these victims, 70.5% were women, and 75.6% of the perpetrators were men. Tragically, 331 individuals were killed due to domestic violence, with over 80% being women. The data also highlighted that over half of the inner-familial violence victims were either under 14 or over 60 years old.

Several cases from 2023 illustrate the impact of domestic violence on youth:

1. A 15-year-old girl in Bavaria was severely abused by her father for several years. The abuse was only discovered when she confided in a teacher, leading to her father's arrest.
2. A 12-year-old boy in Berlin faced continuous physical abuse from his stepfather. The abuse came to light when school authorities noticed his injuries and reported the case to the police.
3. In Hamburg, three siblings aged 10, 13, and 16 were victims of severe neglect and physical abuse by their mother. Neighbours alerted child protection services after noticing the children's poor condition.

These cases underscore the severe and ongoing issue of domestic violence in Germany, particularly affecting women and children.

Analysing the changes from 2019 to 2023, significant shifts in domestic violence trends are evident. The number of domestic violence cases has increased, with 256,276 victims documented in 2023, reflecting a 6.5% rise from previous years. Women and children remain the primary victims, highlighting their heightened vulnerability. The majority of perpetrators are male, and this gender disparity in perpetrator demographics has remained consistent.

The COVID-19 pandemic influenced the dynamics of domestic violence, with increased funding for support services, legal reforms to protect victims, and awareness campaigns aimed at prevention and early intervention. These trends illustrate the evolving landscape of domestic violence in Germany, emphasizing the need for continued efforts in support, prevention, and legislative action.

Domestic violence severely impacts young people, affecting their physical, psychological, and social well-being. The psychological effects include anxiety, depression, suicidal

thoughts, PTSD, low self-esteem, and difficulty trusting others. Behaviourally, young victims may exhibit aggression, bullying, antisocial behaviour, substance abuse, and poor academic performance. Physically, they may suffer injuries from direct abuse or attempting to intervene, psychosomatic symptoms like headaches and stomach-aches, and sleep disturbances.

Long-term effects of domestic violence on young victims include an increased risk of entering abusive relationships as adults, a higher likelihood of becoming abusers themselves, and ongoing mental health issues into adulthood. These statistics highlight the severe and lasting impact of domestic violence on young people.

Germany faces several challenges in addressing domestic violence:

- Underreporting: despite the prevalence of domestic violence, many cases go unreported due to victims' shame or hope for improvement. Studies indicate that one in four women in Germany experience domestic violence, but reporting remains low.
- Immigrant victims: victims with derivative residence rights face complications, as divorcing a violent spouse can potentially lead to loss of residence rights, creating additional barriers to seeking help.
- Limited asylum grounds: domestic violence suffered in the victim's country of origin is generally not considered sufficient grounds for asylum in Germany unless it involves systematic gender-based violence by state officials.
- Lack of recent data: the most recent comprehensive survey on intimate partner violence (IPV) against women in Germany is nearly a decade old, and key findings from larger surveys are almost two decades old. This lack of up-to-date data hinders effective policy-making and resource allocation.
- Gender disparities in research: while there is data on IPV against women, the first nationally representative data on IPV against men in Germany was only recently introduced, indicating a historical gap in understanding the full scope of domestic violence.
- Varied forms of violence: domestic violence in Germany includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, making it challenging to address all forms effectively.
- Children's exposure: in 60% of domestic violence cases, children are present in the household. The impact on children's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development poses an additional challenge in addressing the issue comprehensively.

Access to services and resources

Looking at the services available to victims of domestic violence (e.g. counselling, legal aid) and the accessibility of these services to victims, including possible barriers to access (e.g. geographical, financial, cultural, economic), the following data emerged. However, challenges such as geographic barriers, cultural stigma, resource limitations, and coordination issues persist, highlighting the need for continuous improvement and adaptation to ensure effective support for all victims.

Spain

Spain offers comprehensive services and resources for victims of domestic violence, primarily through governmental and municipal initiatives.

Financial aid: Victims can access financial aid under various programs, including:

- Compensation for death, severe disability, or absolute permanent disability,
- Rental aid,
- Active Insertion- Income (RAI),
- Emergency aid for women victims of violence,
- Valencian Inclusion Income,
- Municipal social emergency aid.

Resources

- Phone 016-016 Online: the Ministry of Equality provides a telephone information service, legal advice, and immediate psychosocial attention for all forms of violence against women. This service is available through multiple channels, including phone, WhatsApp, online chat, and email.
- ATENPRO: this service offers immediate attention through mobile communication and tele location technologies, providing 24/7 support to victims.
- Monitoring System: a telematic system monitors compliance with prohibitions on approaching victims, providing updated information on any violations.
- Offices of attention to Crime Victims: these offices provide comprehensive support, including legal guidance, psychological assistance, and coordination with various institutions.
- Courts of Violence Against Women: specialized courts handle cases of gender violence.

- Violet Point: an initiative to involve society in fighting sexist violence and spreading information on how to act in cases of violence against women.
- VIOPEP: a program to temporarily shelter the animals of women victims of violence.

At the regional and local levels, there are 24-hour Women Centres offering comprehensive care, basic and specific primary care centres of the public social services system, and equality councils at the city council level.

Accessibility:

- Urban areas: geographic location allows adequate access to resources, though waiting times may be an issue.
- Rural areas: victims in rural areas face isolation, lack of specialized resources, and conservative social environments that can increase vulnerability.

Spain has a strong political commitment to eradicating violence, with annual awareness campaigns, multidisciplinary professional teams, and involvement of state security forces. However, coordination between agents can sometimes be challenging, and there is a risk of resource overlap and variability in service quality across regions.

Portugal

Services Available: Portugal has developed a robust support network for domestic violence victims, including helplines, shelters, and specialized training for police and service providers. Key services include:

- Family Justice Centres and APAV: provide legal, psychological, and social support.
- Helplines: ensure immediate assistance.
- National Support Network: coordinates multiple services for holistic support.

Accessibility:

- Geographical barriers: limited availability of services in rural and remote areas.
- Cultural stigma: societal attitudes discourage victims from seeking help.
- Language barriers: challenges faced by non-Portuguese speaking victims.
- Lack of awareness: victims may not know about available services.

- Fear of retaliation: concerns about increased violence or retaliation from the abuser.

Effectiveness: Portugal's specialized training and coordinated response have improved the handling of domestic violence cases. However, resource limitations, inconsistent service quality, and underreporting remain significant gaps.

Cyprus

Services Available: In Cyprus, most services are provided by SPAVO, including:

- Helpline 1440: staffed by psychologists and social workers.
- SMS and Live Chat: additional communication methods for victims.
- European Helplines: for disappeared children and children's support.
- Social Services and Shelters: provide basic necessities and secure temporary hosting facilities.
- Proteas Program: an intervention program for perpetrators.
- Woman's House: a multidisciplinary centre for comprehensive victim support.

Accessibility:

- Geographical barriers: limited access in rural areas.
- Language barriers: challenges for non-native speakers.
- Economic barriers: financial constraints affecting access to services.

Effectiveness: Resource limitations and coordination issues between services and organizations impact the effectiveness of domestic violence support in Cyprus.

Italy

Services Available: Italy offers a range of services through institutional and organizational initiatives:

- Hotlines (1522): provides psychological and legal support.
- Organizations like Telefono Rosa: offer legal advice and psychological assistance, including support for parenting and managing the consequences of witnessing violence.

- Work Leave and Allowances: for women in protection programs.
- Projects like GEA and Cambiamo le regole: focus on prevention and support.
- SCUDO Application: supports emergency response activities by law enforcement.

Accessibility:

- Geographical disparities: urban areas have better access compared to rural regions.
- Language and cultural barriers: immigrant victims face additional challenges.

Effectiveness: Italy has robust laws and a variety of support services, but challenges include coordination between agencies and ensuring consistent service quality across regions.

Germany

Services Available: Germany provides several key services:

- Federal Helpline (116 016): counselling in multiple languages.
- Women's Shelters (Frauenhäuser): offer shelter, counselling, and support.
- Legal Assistance: provided by organizations like Weißer Ring.
- Counselling Centres: offered by Caritas and Diakonie.
- Police Protection and Civil Court Protection: temporary contact bans and stay-away orders.

Accessibility:

- Language: multilingual services improve accessibility.
- Geographic: urban areas have better service availability than rural areas.
- Cultural and economic barriers: immigrant victims face additional challenges, and awareness of available services can be limited.

Effectiveness: Germany has a range of services, but underreporting, data gaps, and support for immigrant victims are areas needing improvement.

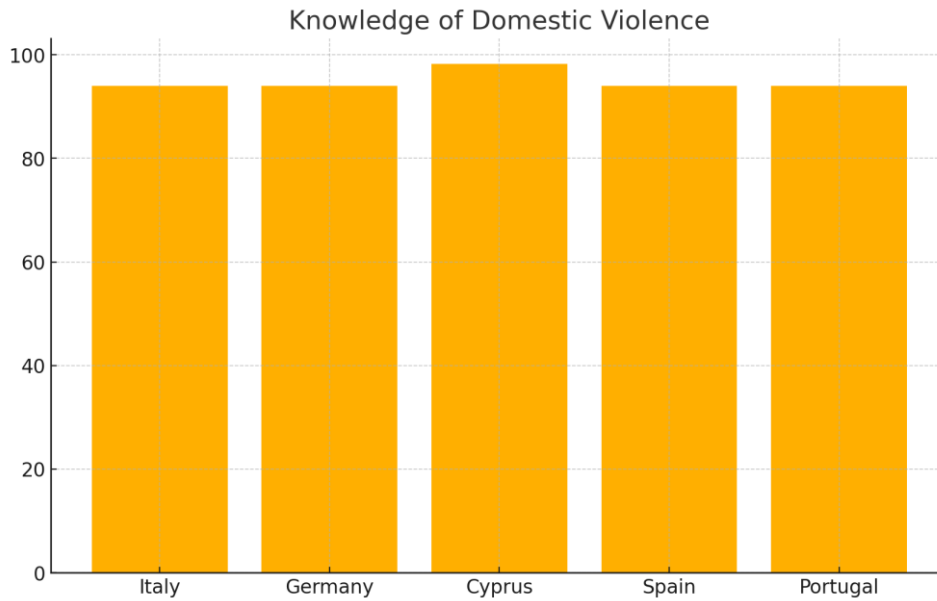
Questionnaire results

The purpose of this questionnaire was to analyse the perceptions and experiences of young people regarding domestic violence and gender-based violence. The data collected from a survey includes questions on personal experiences, knowledge of available resources, and suggestions for improving support systems. The questionnaire was answered by 362 young people (far beyond the number envisaged at the design stage) with ages between 13 and 24 years of age.

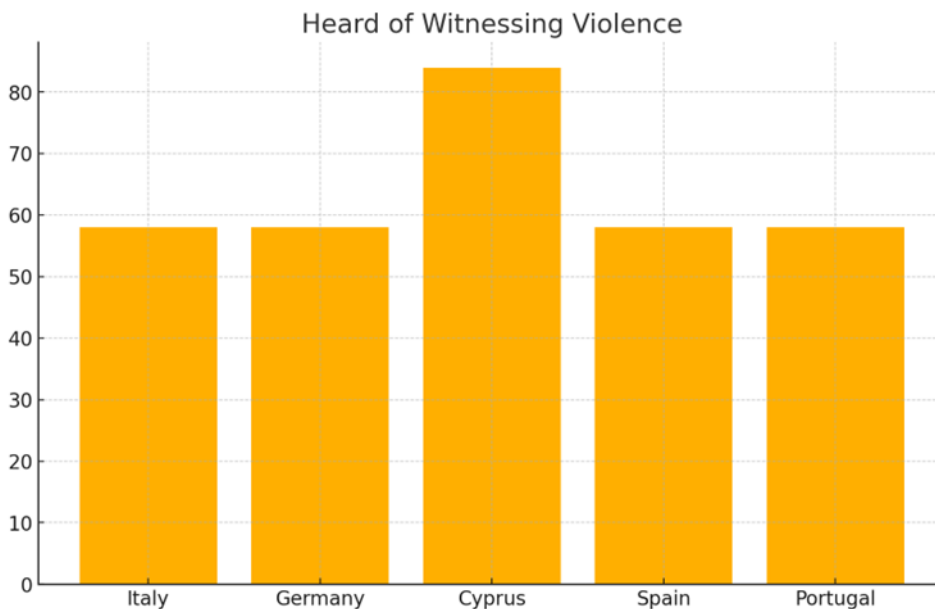
The questionnaire covered some aspects to gain understanding on of how domestic violence impacts young people who are indirect victims of violence (as opposed to direct victims). Specifically, the questionnaire was organized in different sections: knowledge about domestic violence and gender-based violence;

- Impact of DV on individuals;
- Forms of helps and support for victims of DV;
- Knowledge of available resources and educational programs;
- Improvement measures to be implemented for who have experienced DV

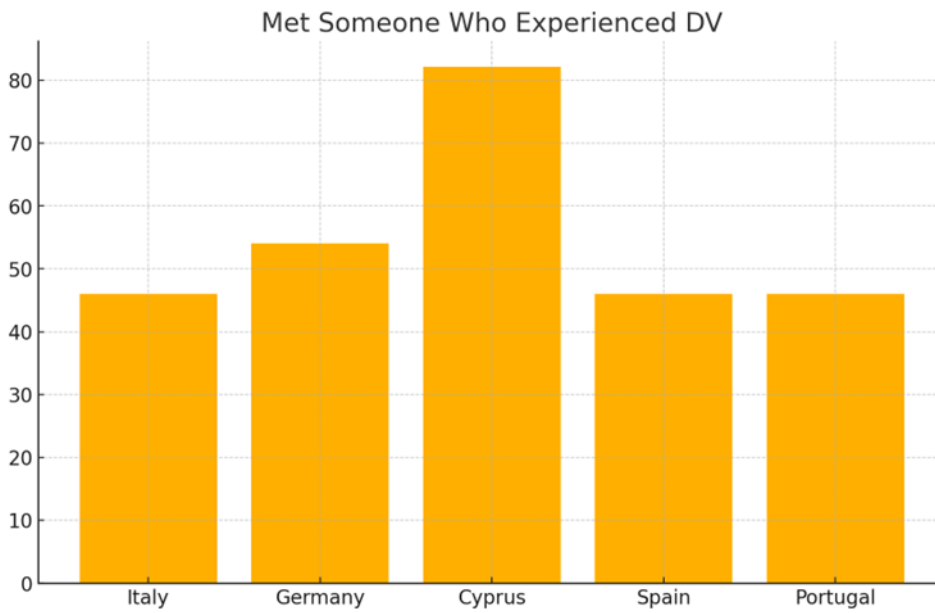
When it comes to the participants their knowledge about DV and gender-based violence, the response of majority of participants has benne the awareness of what domestic violence or gender-based violence is. The percentages range from 94% to 98.2%, indicating a high level of awareness across the board.



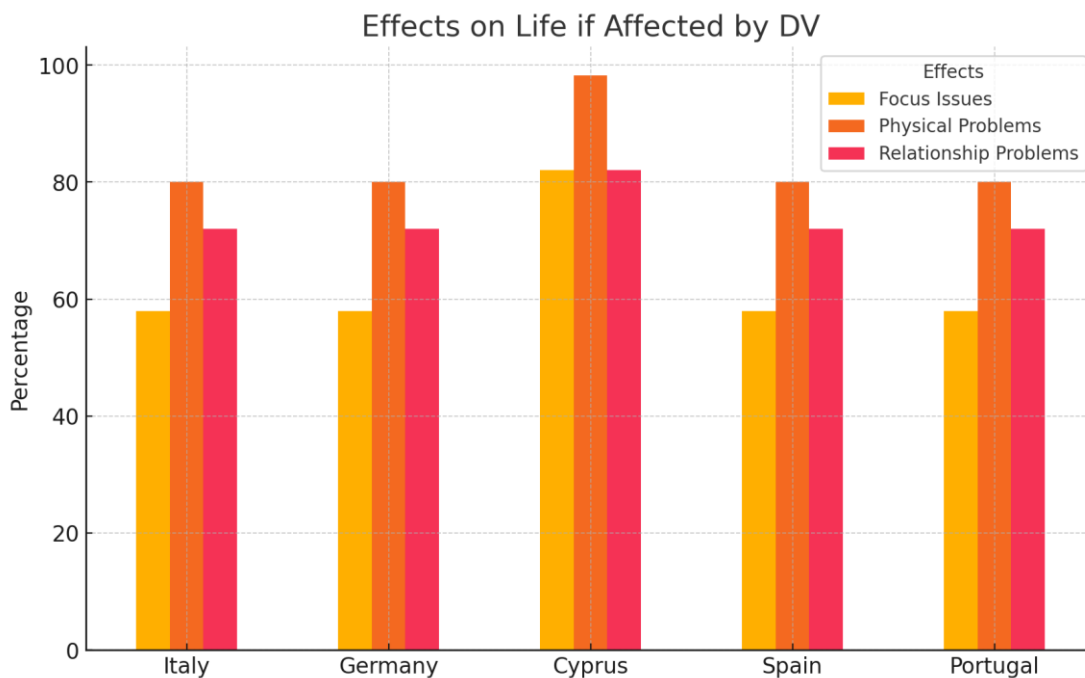
A significant percentage of participants have heard about the concept of witnessing violence, with values ranging from 58% to 83.9%. Cyprus shows the highest awareness in this regard.



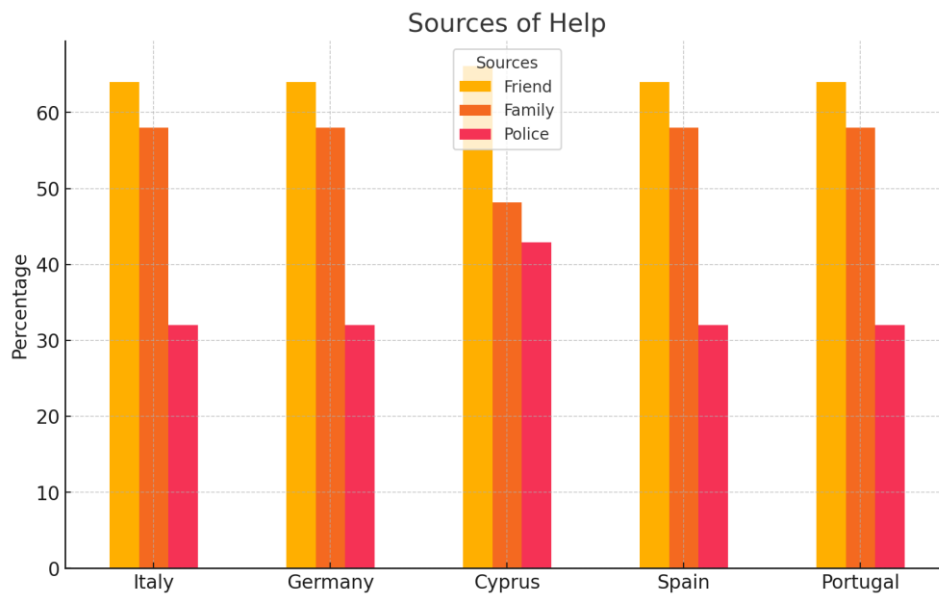
The percentages of participants who have met someone who has experienced domestic violence vary significantly, from 46% to 82.1%: this indicates varying levels of personal connection to victims across different countries.



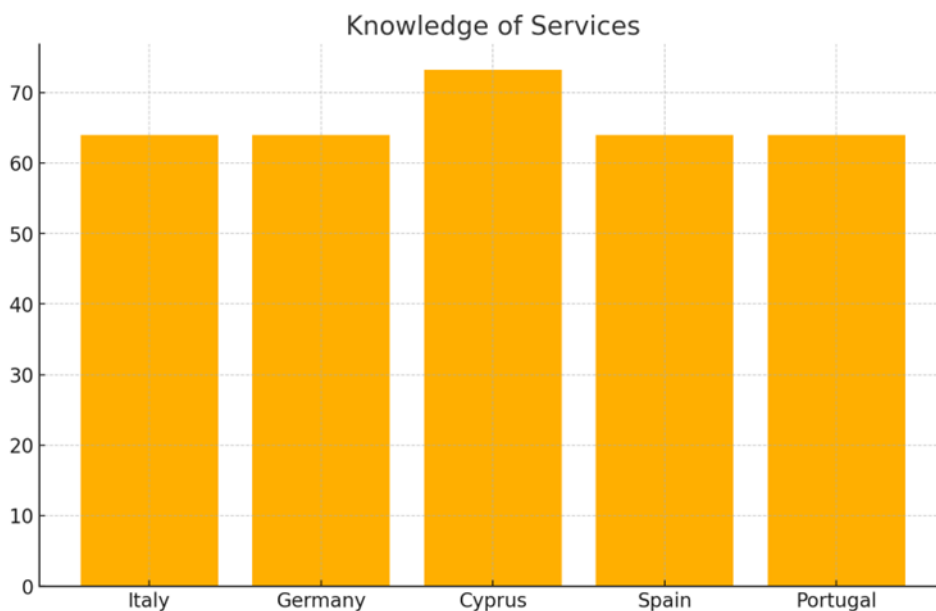
Commonly reported effects include difficulty focusing on studies or work, mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, and relationship problems with friends and family. These responses highlight the broad impact of domestic violence on victims' lives.



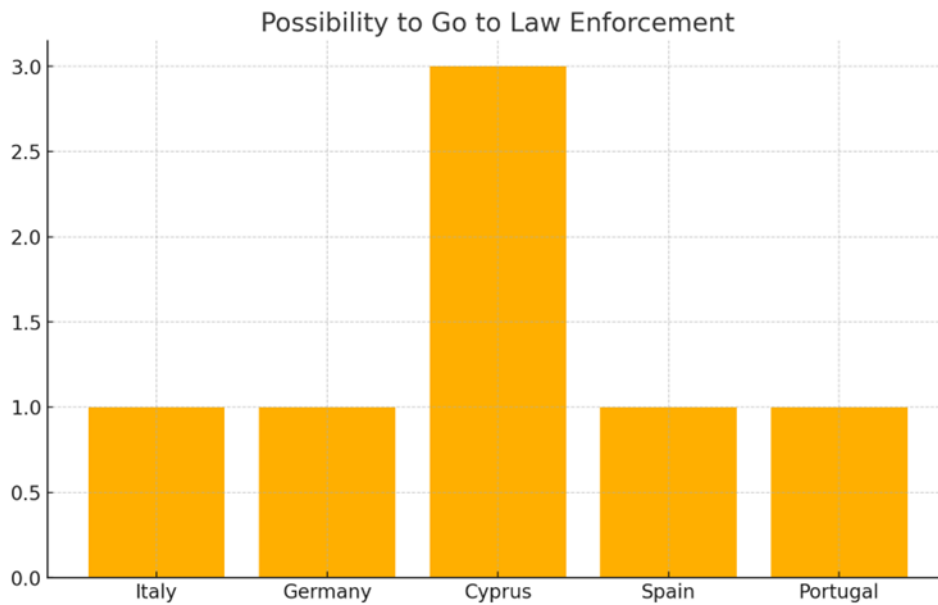
Friends, family, and law enforcement are the most cited sources of help. Friends are the most common source of help in all countries, indicating a preference for personal networks over official institutions.



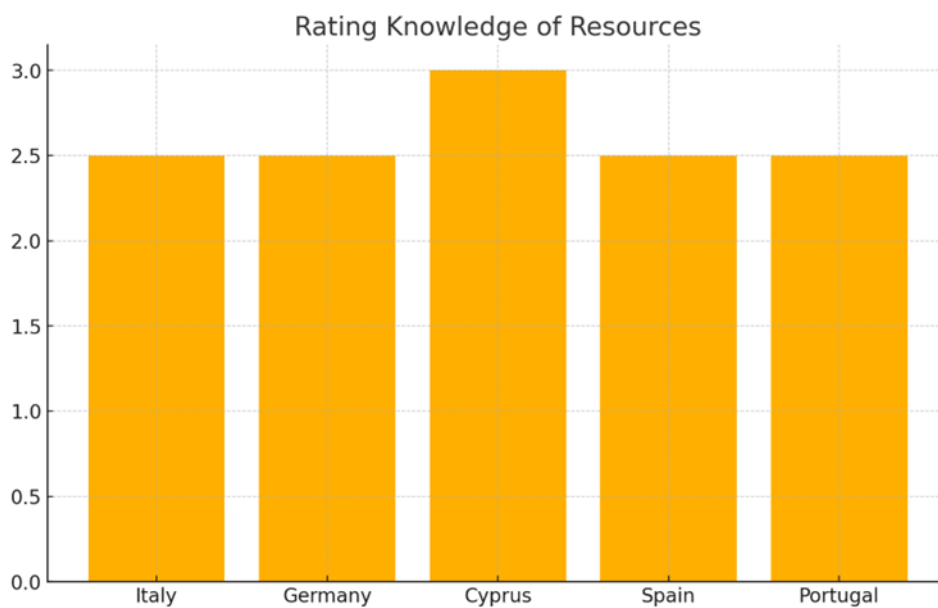
A significant number of participants are aware of services or associations available to help victims of domestic violence, with percentages ranging from 64% to 73.2%. However, there is still a considerable portion who are unaware.



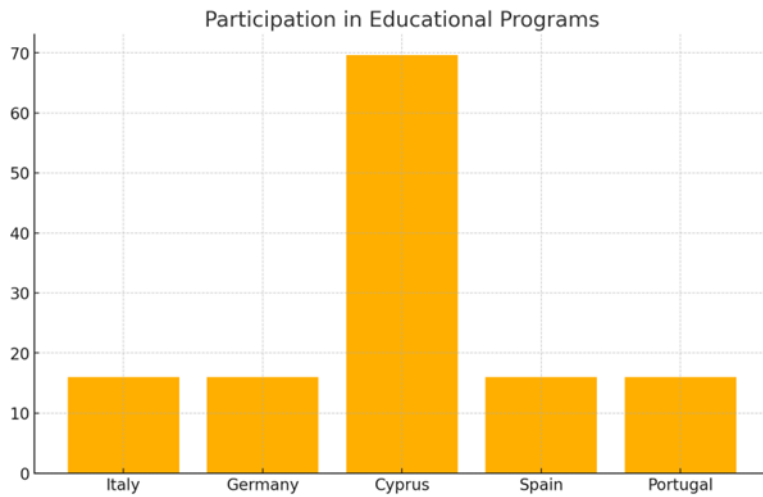
Most participants believe it is possible to go directly to law enforcement in a domestic violence situation. In Cyprus, responses varied more, indicating some uncertainty or conditional belief in law enforcement's effectiveness.



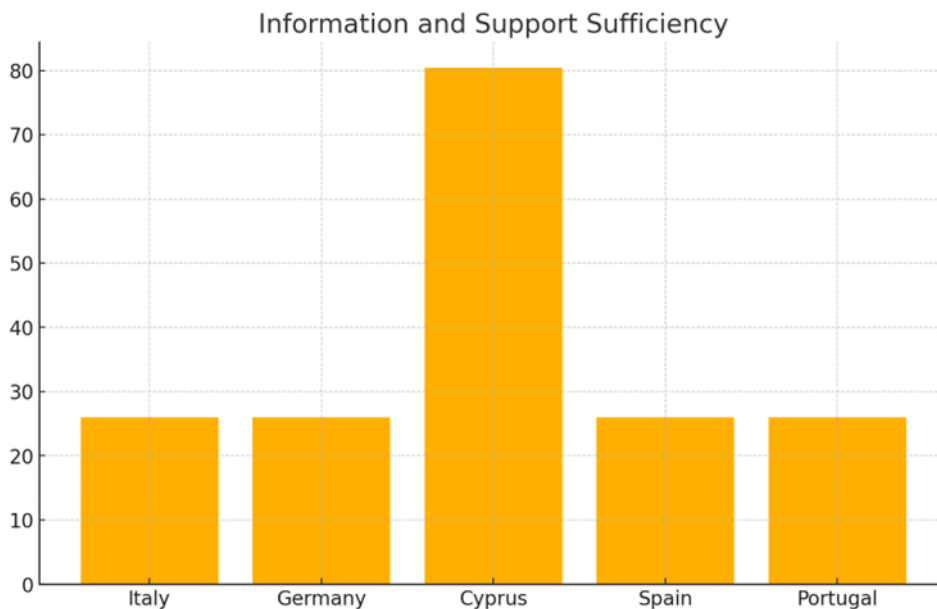
The average rating of knowledge about available resources is generally low to medium, indicating a need for increased awareness and information dissemination about available support services.



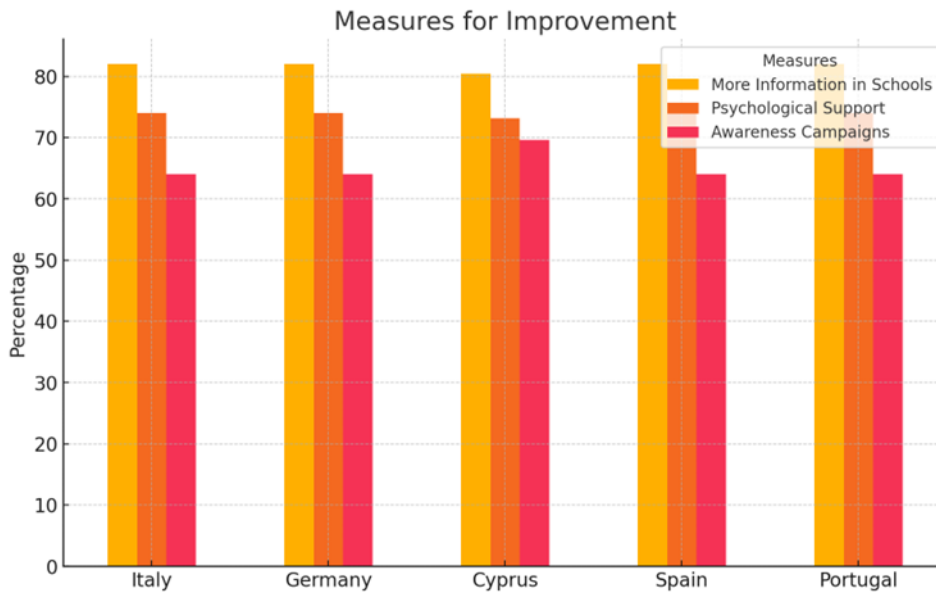
Participation in educational programs on domestic violence or gender-based violence is generally low, with the exception of Cyprus, where 69.6% of participants reported having taken part in such programs.



A majority of participants believe that young people do not have enough information and support to deal with domestic violence situations. This sentiment is particularly strong in Cyprus, with 80.4% expressing this view.



Suggested measures to improve support for young people include more information in schools, enhanced psychological support, and awareness campaigns. Schools are frequently mentioned as key venues for providing more information.



Conclusion

The analysis of domestic violence across the partner countries reveals significant progress and ongoing challenges in addressing this pervasive issue. Each country has made substantial legislative and social strides to protect victims and prosecute perpetrators, yet much work remains to ensure comprehensive support and effective prevention.

Spain

Spain has seen significant advancements in addressing gender violence since the mid-2000s, with increased awareness and comprehensive public services focusing on prevention, education, and protection. Despite these improvements, challenges remain, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated domestic violence. Additionally, the rise of new extremisms and denialist attitudes contributes to an increase in aggression and societal justification of violence against women. While legal frameworks have advanced, there is a need for ongoing cultural change to fully eradicate gender violence.

Portugal

Portugal has made notable progress through solid legislation and specific programs. However, domestic violence remains a pressing issue, with thousands of cases reported annually. The impact on children is profound, affecting their mental health, educational outcomes, and social relationships. Family members also suffer emotional and financial burdens. Challenges include restricted access to services in rural areas, cultural barriers, and limited resources. There is a need for increased public awareness, enhanced quality of services, and better aftercare to support victims effectively.

Cyprus

In Cyprus, awareness of domestic violence is high, with many people acknowledging its prevalence and impact. Despite this, there is a recognized need for better support and information, particularly for young people. The country faces challenges in accessibility to services due to geographical, language, and economic barriers. Resource limitations and coordination issues also affect the effectiveness of support services. Increasing information in schools and enhancing awareness campaigns are crucial steps to improve support for victims.

Italy

Italy has made significant legislative progress, especially with the adoption of the Istanbul Convention and the implementation of the "Codice Rosso" law. Despite these

advancements, domestic violence remains pervasive, with women and children frequently targeted. There is a promising awareness of domestic violence among young people, but gaps in knowledge about specific support mechanisms persist. Recommendations for Italy include enhanced educational programs, increased psychological support services, continuous awareness campaigns, strengthened legal frameworks, and improved cooperation between institutions.

Germany

Germany has a robust legal and social framework to combat domestic violence, complemented by numerous government and NGO initiatives. Despite these efforts, challenges such as underreporting, cultural barriers, and limited data persist. The rise in domestic violence cases underscores the need for targeted interventions, especially for youth. Suggestions for improvement include enhanced educational programs, better access to psychological services, strengthened reporting mechanisms, targeted awareness campaigns, and improved legal and social support for young victims.

Overall conclusions

While the partner countries have made significant progress in combating domestic violence, continuous efforts are essential to address the remaining challenges. Increasing public awareness, improving accessibility and quality of services, ensuring comprehensive aftercare, and fostering cultural change are crucial steps to enhance support for victims and prevent future violence. By addressing these areas, the countries can build a more effective and compassionate response to domestic violence, ensuring the safety and well-being of all victims.

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