Project partners:
- German Police University (DHPol), Germany (Coordination)
- Vienna Centre for Societal Security (VICESSE), Austria
- Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), Austria
- Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), France
- Centre de Recherche de l’École des Officiers de la Gendarmerie Nationale (CREOGN), France
- Police University College (POLAMK), Finland
- The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Finland
- University of Münster (WWU), Germany
- Police Berlin (PB), Germany
- European Research Services GmbH (ERS), Germany
- FORESEE Research Group (FORESEE), Hungary
- Ministry of Internal Affairs (PSP/ISCPSI), Portugal
- University of Glasgow (UoG), Scotland
- Police Scotland (PS), Scotland, United Kingdom
- University of Maribor (UM), Slovenia
- Ministry of Interior, General Police Directorate (MOI), Slovenia

Work Plan:

WP 1: Contextualizing the frontline response
WP 2: Exploring the frontline response
WP 3: Development of IMPRODOVA toolkits
WP 4: Assessing the IMPRODOVA toolkits
WP 5: Dissemination, communication and exploitation
WP 6: Coordination and management

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 787054.
International research evidence highlights the profound impact of domestic violence (DV) on the life of mainly women and their children, but men can be victims as well. Yet, less than one third of domestic violence victims seek help from the police and domestic abuse remains an enduring social problem.*

International organizations have promoted standards for how police and other frontline responders such as the medical community or social services should address this particular form of violence in a way that is consistent with the Istanbul Convention. However, relatively little has been done to ascertain how far these high-level standards have been converted into practice ‘on the ground’, or to identify the still existing barriers or facilitators to report DV.

The ambition of IMPRODOVA is to address these critical issues through a conceptually and methodologically innovative two-fold approach:

- examining through robust research whether, and how, the key objectives of the international policies and guidance are currently met; and
- developing this advanced knowledge into new, implementable solutions for practitioners and policy makers working at the national and local levels.

* Fundamental Rights Agency 2014

The IMPRODOVA project

IMPRODOVA is a research and innovation project concerning human factors shaping responses to domestic violence, a behavior causing physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggressions, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behavior. IMPRODOVA’s operational definition of high impact domestic violence (HIDV) is serious violence within the family, against children, spouses and elderly family members. Seriousness can be intensity, duration and consequences of violence.

The project will study responses to domestic violence in eight European partner countries (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Scotland and Slovenia). IMPRODOVA aims to improve and integrate the response of police, social work, health and non-governmental organizations and other actors making up the ecosystem of frontline responders to domestic violence. Across Europe, there are examples of good practices from which we can learn.

The project goals

- Map the regulatory frameworks, guidelines, risk assessment formats and training materials shaping institutional responses to HDV in Europe and identify gaps, shortcomings and incompatibilities.
- Document how the present regulatory frameworks shape the work and cooperation of frontline responders in the field and identify the role played by human factors. Describe and highlight good practices.
- Develop new and re-design existing tool kits, guidance and training for frontline responders exploiting the results of in-depth field research, using first-hand stakeholder knowledge and addressing gaps identified, taking into account variations across different national and local sites.
- Assess, validate and adapt tools and guidelines using stakeholders’ feedback to demonstrate the feasibility of an innovative approach to support and govern frontline responder networks in HDV, exploiting stakeholders’ knowledge, using a bottom-up strategy to identify and productively address human factors.
- Improve the cooperation and performance of frontline responder ecosystems to HDV considering existing heterogeneities across different settings.
- Create a positive feedback loop, which increases reporting rates of HDV to police, and the medical profession, community and social work practitioners who act as first responders and agents of HDV victims’ risk assessment.

“Often when DV occurs, police officers arrive at the scene too late to reduce coercive control in intimate partnerships, or to prevent such violent encounters in the future. However, law enforcement together with other first responders like family doctors, victim services, public health, and youth administration can cooperate in order to stop escalation, traumatization and violent offending. This is the starting point of IMPRODOVA.”

Prof. Dr. Joachim Kersten
Coordinator of the IMPRODOVA project

Anticipated impacts of IMPRODOVA

Policy-making recommendations for high impact domestic violence: realistically applicable/ implementable by European law enforcement agencies and other first responders

Recommendations and models for efficient ways to organize inter-agency cooperation between the police, medical and health care services, social work and NGOs

Training materials designed to improve competencies for first responders to better deal with DV cases, support victims, hold perpetra-tors accountable, and enhance cooperation across multiple agencies

Recommendations for practitioners responding to domestic violence cases: sensitive to multicultural and gender issues, and to the ethical challenges, psychological stress, and specific safety risks to law enforcement agencies in entering the private sphere in which domestic violence occurs

Awareness raising among teachers, social workers, health care workers and citizens about the destructive consequences of domestic violence, and about the importance of consolidated efforts against violence

Recommendations for comparable survey research that would extend and complement existing Eurobarometer and other domestic violence data to build a responsive evidence base for ongoing practice improvements

* Coordinator of the IMPRODOVA project

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