



Honour Ambassadors against Shame Practices

Mapping HRV practices against women Comparative Analysis Report

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Comparative analysis of national reports under the Project HASP - Honour Ambassadors against Shame Practices

1. Major achievements and good practices

- *The concept of HRV and identification of groups at risk*

In all the countries reviewed the identification, research and awareness about the phenomenon are at different stages of development. Going from the UK where the phenomenon has history and is most recognizable, then come Italy, Spain, and finally Greece and Bulgaria, in the latter the phenomenon still being in the process of identification. These **differences follow the patterns of migration** which started much earlier in the first countries mentioned where there are relatively stable migrant communities which are identified as the most at risk of HRV.

This touches upon the issue of the **groups and communities at risk** identified in the reports which vary but the common denominator is the presence of three major groups at risk in all countries:

- closed migrant communities residing in the countries
- ethnic and religious, mainly Muslim communities “endemic” for the respective country
- Roma or traveller communities, called in different ways in the different countries, as a specific and diverse group for each country



- “new comers” , refugees from the flows caused by the conflict zones in the last years, seeking status and international protection in Europe.

As a pattern in all countries, the most affected by HRV are the poor and economically vulnerable communities, the most isolated, and closed communities.

It has been confirmed by the national reports that the most recognized and recognizable pattern of “honour” related violence is the one originating from Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian countries. By the means of migration, people from these regions took their tradition and practices to the new countries and started executing them there. “Honour” is expressed in many other terms, including “shame,” “izzat”, “avenging,” “saving face”, and *ongoing blood vengeance*.

Forms of HRV identified in the reports vary from “honour” killing, FGM practices, forced marriages, to some examples of “honour” related murders for reasons such as dressing or behaving in a westernized manner, falling in love with somebody not chosen by their family, rejecting a forced marriage, initiating divorce, or being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer, intersex, or asexual. Honour related violence has been identified as a fluid phenomenon and it is necessary to pay attention to the changes in the motives and the root causes at the basis of it, to the different and new types and expressions of HRV.

A range of types of HRV are identified, non-exhaustively, and discussed in the reports, like, for example, FGM and femicide in Italy, forced marriages and FGM, and honour killings in the UK, child marriages in Roma communities in Bulgaria, forced marriages among women asylum- seekers in Bulgaria and in Muslim communities in Greece.

The latest political developments and recent new migration flows make the phenomenon of HRV even more complex and difficult to study, to identify in its various forms and to tackle by institutions and by society as a whole. It is obvious from the reports that HRV has multiple facets and has to be considered through the lenses of women’s rights, human rights, multiple discrimination, migration, broader socio- economic and political context, different types of fundamentalism and, more recently, also extremism.

In all national reports, this complex environment of HRV is captured. Due to that, and due to the related dynamic concept and forms of HRV, the **research, data collection and identification processes** and activities face challenges and are at different levels of development in the countries under review. More advanced theoretical and conceptual approach is shown by the situation in the UK, with stronger identification of causes, good level of research activities exists also in Italy and Spain. In Greece and Bulgaria also the connection with the new flows of persons fleeing conflict zones and seeking humanitarian and refugee status is captured by research. Despite the absence of comprehensive and regular statistics and research by the states, in all countries there is good level of more in- depth research of some communities at risk, also thanks to initiatives of various NGOs.

Independently, and in all the reports the **link between GBV in all its forms and HRV** is clearly identified and more and more present in the process of conceptualization of HRV. The



underlying gender stereotypes in society and in the attitude of institutions, as factors adding to the severity of the phenomenon, are identified and exposed, mainly through women's NGOs. They insist on the gender perspective and the "recognition of patriarchy as a system of social organization" as being the origin of the problem /Italy/.

A common denominator identified is the progress made in raising awareness about HRV and the **leading role of the women's NGOs** in this process and in the support of victims.

- **The legislative response**

All the countries under review are State parties to the CEDAW Convention which is the major international instrument guaranteeing protection at global level against discrimination and violence against women and girls. Spain and Italy ratified also the regional instrument- the Istanbul Convention, the rest of the countries have just signed it. **The international instruments are crucial incentive** for effective legislation and its implementation. The national legal provisions are the ones that are called to respond quickly to the dynamic phenomena of GBV and HRV. All reviewed countries have **achievements in the field of protection against domestic violence and GBV** with reliable and specialized legislation providing for protection and support of the victims of violence. The *Bulgarian Law on Protection from Domestic violence* from 2005 is a good example of a civil law ensuring a broad range of protection measures through orders for protection issued by the court. Republic of Bulgaria signed the Istanbul Convention in April 2016 and in the process of ensuring compliance of national legislation with the Convention it is proposed that the quick protection by the court encompass also other forms of violence, like sexual violence, forced marriages, stalking. The *Spanish Law from 2004* is a complex instrument with strong and interdisciplinary material and procedural guarantees, as well as services and assistance for victims in civil and penal, and administrative law. The positive elements include also the clear gender dimension, the prohibition of mediation and the fact that all the issues related to the children in the context of partner violence are decided by the same court.

The UK is the country where the most advanced and elaborated **protection against specific forms of HRV** is in place. For example, *The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003* which modernized the offence of FGM and the offence of assisting a girl to carry out FGM on herself while also creating extra-territorial offences to deter people from taking girls abroad for mutilation. *UK Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007* provides for the family courts to make a Forced Marriage Protection Order to prevent a forced marriage from occurring or to offer protective measures when a forced marriage has already taken place.

Important developments are reflected in penal legislation of Italy and Greece, for example, in the direction of **explicit recognition and punishment of marital rape**. The *Greek Law 3500/2006*, entitled «*For combating domestic violence*» aims to prevent and combat intimate partner violence, such as battering, marital rape, sexual violence and abuse, sexual assault and intimidation. The law ensures the protection of victims by means of facilitating their access to judicial procedures, and guaranteeing their security. The *Bulgarian Penal Code* provides for criminal responsibility for forced marriages and for cohabitation with minors. Furthermore, for ensuring compliance with the Istanbul Convention amendments in Bulgarian penal law are



forthcoming- they will ensure better access to justice for women victims of violence. Penal protection against crimes of HRV is strengthened also in Italy under the influence of the Istanbul Convention and FGM is explicitly considered a crime under Italian law.

We observe the progress in adoption of more favorable legislation for women asylum seekers, allowing their protection and receiving of status on the basis of GBV and HRV. This is a requirement in parallel by the EU law and of the Istanbul Convention. For example, in Italy legislation regulating the immediate issuing of residence permits to the foreign victim of domestic violence is in place.

In addition to the good practices of legislation on GBV and HRV, progressive solutions are noted in the gender equality and non- discrimination laws, legislation on education and on accommodation of education for minorities /Greece/.

- **The institutional response**

The response of state institutions in all countries reviewed can be illustrated by the examples as follows:

Italy- An **Interdisciplinary National Observatory** on gender violence was established and, in addition, authorities at regional level have powers and jurisdiction on issues of FGM, femicide, stalking, gender discrimination. Connected to these competences is the signing of interdisciplinary **local protocols to develop anti-violence networks**. An example of such agreement and of the idea to develop strategic partnerships is the agreement of the National Association of Italian Municipalities with the Women Association Network Against Violence (D.I.Re), which represents more than 80 anti- violence centers on national level.

Since 2006 the government has established the **national hotline 1522 (“Telefono Rosa”)**, for victims or witnesses of any form of violence, which is active 24h per day. The service is **multilingual** (in Italian, English, French, Spanish and Arabic). A multilingual hotline and online service to report abuses is ensured also by the Office for the promotion of racial and ethnic equality and the elimination of discrimination.

Spain - Similarly, an Interagency agreement on the coordination of actions related to gender violence in the Valencian community was signed. In the Valencian police, the GAMA group (group of attention to the abuse) was formed. Their function is to protect and advise the victims of gender and domestic violence having a protection or restraining order or before they file a report.

UK- as an example of **institutional and financial sustainability**, in March 2016, the Home Office published its 2016- 20 **Strategy to end violence against women and girls**. This includes £80 million of dedicated funding to provide core support for refuges and other accommodation-based services, rape support centers and national helplines. Since April 2017, a new Violence Against Women and Girls Service Transformation Fund supports local domestic abuse service provision.

In January 2005, the **Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)** as a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office unit was which set up for support of the policy on forced marriage and it



operates both inside the UK and overseas. The FMU operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims of forced marriage as well as to professionals dealing with cases.

Greece- The General Secretariat for Gender Equality and the Research Centre for Equality Matters (KETHI) have been established to promote the advancement and development of women and received a good assessment in the Greek national report. Another good practice is **the creation of an integrated network structures to combat violence against women** through an EU- funded programme. The network includes fourteen (14) Advisory centers of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and twenty-five (25) Consultation centers in 25 municipalities and nineteen (19) shelters in municipalities of the country that were selected based on population and geographical criteria. The aim is to provide support and counseling services to women victims of violence and their children in preventing and fighting the major forms of gender-based violence.

Bulgaria- As examples of good practices can be noted, in the first place, the mechanism for financing through the state budget of projects of NGOs dealing with prevention and protection from domestic violence, as provided in the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence. Each year **the Ministry of Justice allocates funds for projects of NGOs** aimed at the implementation of the law and the total amount of the scheme is EUR 250 000. Another good practice is the collaboration of the Ministry of Interior with other stakeholders, including NGOs, for the elaboration at yearly basis and implementation of the **Programme for Prevention and combating DV**. For the last two years the programme provides for specific awareness among and protection of vulnerable groups of women and girls, including women seeking international protection.

Of particular interest for the present initiative are the examples of **training projects** and those related to elaboration of **training materials**. Here are some instances of such achievements:

Italy- the Ministry of Health has developed specific guidelines for professionals' healthcare operators and others for **training and education on Female Genital Mutilation** prevention.

UK- the government has developed a **new forced marriage e-learning package** for professionals. The modules aim to enable professionals to recognize the warning signs of forced marriage and ensure that the appropriate action is taken to help, protect and support all those at risk. The package contains also special guidance for parliamentarians.

In addition, the FMU undertake an extensive outreach and training programme of around 100 events a year, targeting both professionals and potential victims, plus media campaigns.

The FMU has produced various resources to assist practitioners, such as *the Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance for dealing with forced marriage 2014*. Guidance is for all persons and bodies who exercise public function in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

Multi-Agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage 2014 - Step-by-step advice for frontline workers. Essential reading for health professionals, educational staff, police, children's social care, adult social services and local authority housing.



The promising practices in education and training mentioned above are a good transition to the next section as they represent also worthwhile tools for prevention.

- **Role of NGOs and prevention**

Vibrant civil society in the countries studied, and mainly women’s NGOs, are those which ensure the protection for the victims of GBV and HRV. Prevention and protection projects and programmes complement successfully themselves, like, for example:

Italy - La Buona Scuola Reform, a three-years’ plan to be implemented in schools of every grade on equal opportunities, education on gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence and aimed at reforming the culture of students.

Project “Aisha” for combating violence and discrimination against women in Lombardia Region- project launched in March 2016 and promoted by the Coordination of Islamic associations of Milan, Monza and Brianza (CAIM). It aims at raising awareness among Muslim community’s residents in Italy regarding the issues of violence.

Bulgaria- as good practices can be mentioned: The establishment in 2009 of the **Alliance for Protection from GBV**, the first formal network of 11 NGOs from different towns and cities of Bulgaria, with common ideology for ensuring protection of victims and prevention of violence. The NGO organizes since 2013 the **Academy for Prevention of violence** for the education and training of key stakeholders on the issues of GBV- police, the judiciary, psychologists, social workers. Good practice is also the **cooperation of women’ s NGOs with Roma NGOs**, the elaboration and implementation of NGO programmes for working with victims of early and forced marriages and their respective communities, and ensuring prevention and protection programmes for Roma women and girls.

UK- Women’s small grassroots organizations reach marginalized groups of women through their independent status, making their services more appealing to many women compared to statutory support. Led by and for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (LBT) women, disabled, poor, young and older women and women of minority faiths, the women’s sector is a multi-layered safety net for women.

2. Major challenges and recommendations

Based on the systemic gaps and challenges of the legislative and policy responses identified in the national reports, the following general recommendations can be drawn from the reports and can make the basis also for the elaboration further of more general policy recommendations from the project, in view of understanding and improving the situation with HRV/ harmful practices at European level.



General Recommendations:

- **Uniform legislation and national policies as well as harmonized standards between countries addressing the underlying causes of violence, HRV included,** must be adopted and implemented. The legislation/ standards must be clear and directed to answer efficiently the needs of the victims a potential victim, as well as of the actors involved in the fight against gender based violence (civil society organizations, specifically women’s NGOs, etc.).
- **Improvement of the legal framework and its implementation** is needed for filling the identified gaps, namely with the **ratification of the Istanbul Convention and, respectively, the harmonization of civil and penal legislation.** Compliance with and observance of the international, regional and EU standards should be ensured, affirming universality of human rights and women’s rights, including the observance of the Due Diligence principle. Excluding and exposing cultural relativism. Exposing and **countering gender stereotyping and interpretations of traditions and religions harmful** for women and girls.
- **Ensuring the right balance between civil and penal legal interventions** to cases of HRV is essential. **Guaranteeing both penal and civil protection, and quick and even urgent protection by law through court orders for protection, namely, against forced marriages, FGM, stalking and all other forms of GBV.** As not all forms of violence against women, including all acts representing HRV, are criminalized, adequately investigated, prosecuted and punished, **it is necessary that these crimes are recognized as criminal offenses prosecuted by the state.**
- Special attention should be provided through most severe penal sanctions against **femicide cases and honour killings cases** included.
- Avoid, control, supervise and, in the mid- term perspective, **exclude/abolish all alternative systems of justice/ parallel systems** existing in different communities, which represent a serious risk to impact on women’s and girls’ lives, specifically with respect to violence and family issues.
- **Improve equality legislation, anti- discrimination legislation and policy, promoting rights and affirmative action for women and girls from minorities and other groups at risk.** Respect of ethnic minorities groups’ identity and traditions which do not affect negatively human rights.
- **In all interventions to HRV by law, policies, services, mechanisms for protection to include both the direct woman and her children,** as well as to address needs for protection of other family members. **The rights and interests of the child** shall be of paramount importance.
- **Guaranteeing and facilitating in practice access to justice for women and girls victims of GBV and HRV,** also by **ensuring relevant system of legal aid and training of lawyers** and other legal professionals.
- **The data collection systems should be developed and be more efficient** to provide regular information on the characteristics and the extent of GBV and on the phenomenon of HRV, its different forms and prevalence in the different communities at risk.
- In order to address the extreme forms of HRV through the social and legal institutions, there is need for research **to understand the patterns of violence that lead to honour killings.**



- The data should be easier to access in order to allow effective interventions and efficient prevention campaigns in society and in the targeted communities.
- It is fundamental that the organizations of civil society that carry out services and are specialized to support the victims of violence can have access to regular and adequate funding, so they can continue their work. It should not be allowed that services helping women escape forced marriage and honour-based violence close and face drastic budget cuts across the countries, this loss of specialist help will further put victims at risk, as cultural and language barriers mean many women would never go to a generic domestic violence services and refuges.
- Ensuring effective and well-resourced general, special and targeted interdisciplinary services for victims of GBV, and namely HRV, including telephone lines- general and specialized; ensuring their operations and links with other interventions **through the Coordinated response approach, with close connection and central role of NGOs** which are the major service providers and closest to the victims' needs.
- Addressing through services and special treatment programmes also the perpetrators of different forms of violence, including GBV, as part of the coordinated response for the protection of victims.
- To adopt adequate policies, programmes and plans on GBV and HRV, as well to establish the respective responsible coordinating bodies, possibly **with units responsible for forced marriages and other forms of HRV.**
- A mandatory training for all the operators that deal with gender based violence and HRV needs to be guaranteed. Its organization, structure and methodology have to take into consideration the different levels of seniority and involvement of the personnel. The training sessions and courses should encompass social workers, police, lawyers, representatives of the judiciary - investigating bodies, prosecutors and judges, health sector representatives, NGO experts and representatives on the issues of DV, GBV, including specificities of HRV. Special focus should be issues of **identification and targeted and tailored interventions.**
- Special issue in the training courses and sessions should be **the support the deconstruction of stereotypes and prejudices** regarding immigrant and Roma women regarding the VAW and HRV, which is spread out among the providers of social and health services, law enforcement, the judiciary system and teachers. In order to remove barriers for access to justice for women victims of violence special attention should be paid to the training of representatives of the judiciary.
- Training curricula and training tools on HRV, besides providing for a basic general part, should be tailored to the needs and characteristics of the specific group at risk. It is recommended to include as trainers and facilitators representatives of these groups at risk.
- Elaborating, disseminating and updating special materials and guidelines for the training and for the different professionals targeted.
- Organizing and providing materials and guidelines on GBV and HRV also for decision-makers- politicians, parliamentarians, representatives of the executive, and for the administration and relevant civil servants.



- Specific education and training sessions should also be carried out in schools and other relevant educational institutions, where students could learn more not just about the specific topic of GBV and HRV but also about **cultural differences**.
- It is important **to work within the different communities** where the risk of this kind of violence for occurring is particularly high. The aim is to understand and to impact the way of reasoning of the community, **preventing these cases of violence from occurring again**. Honor related violence should be perceived by the community itself as an unacceptable part of tradition. The **emancipation path of the second generation** and its potential for change on one side and the **informal/ alternative justice structures in place** on the other, should be taken into consideration during the information campaigns and training activities.
- In each of the specific cases of communities most affected by HRV, it appears necessary to **approach in separate instances the different actors: men, women and children from the second generation**.
- In the case of the **Roma/travelers' community**, in addition to the approaches and actors mentioned above, mainly **women cultural mediators should be involved** in the **awareness raising activities and in the interventions** within the RSC community.
- It is important to **directly involve the women and men, also youth** from the communities who are considered more at risk, through structured interventions directed at the elimination of stereotypes and victim-shaming.
- A **common collective approach between NGOs** that operate in the field of gender based violence should be adopted, through common and similar actions and programs. It is also important to **build a bridge and to ensure exchange between the academia and these NGOs and the associations** involved in the administration and management of the shelters for victims of violence.
- **The actions and strategies of intervention already in place** need to be reinforced. Specific action plans should target the geographic areas more at risk and those where the positive reactions to the previous interventions were not so effective. This should be in view of a perspective to organize, to implement and strengthen in the medium and long term adequate support services for women and girls.
- The episodes/ cases of honor related **violence should be registered and catalogued** as such. The generic cataloguing of those cases as gender based violence episodes should be discouraged.
- Since **honor related violence is a fluid phenomenon** it is necessary to pay attention to the **changes in the motives and the root causes** at the basis of it, to the different and new types and expressions of HRV.
- The different **types and forms of HRV should be identified periodically among the diverse communities most at risk**, by avoiding labelling these communities, but encompassing the variety of cases- in migrant communities which are already residents in the country, Roma and travellers' communities, among new groups at risk, "new comers" as communities seeking international protection, women asylum seekers and who recently received status. Special attention to Muslim women should be paid, as well as women of colour, where relevant, bearing in mind also different issues of sexual orientation and gender identity.

- It is also vital to pay attention and to tackle the episodes of violence, including HRV in the detention centers, the centers for placement of persons seeking international protection and asylum, in the refugees' camps. Special methods of identification, approaches, tools and trained specialists are needed for intervention and prevention of HRV there.
- Women asylum seekers should be able to access women representatives with relevant expertise in gender violence. There is a need for representatives- social workers, psychologists, lawyers, trained specifically in advocating for survivors of violence, in establishing trust, along keeping confidentiality, as **this is vital in assuring that these women are able to reveal the complete basis of their asylum claims**. Traditions of the refugee communities should be studied and barriers, including language barriers, should be removed.
- Gender sensitivity in asylum procedures should be developed and increased, combined with respective favorable legislation for women asylum seekers and seeking international protection more in general, **allowing their protection and receiving status on the basis of GBV and HRV, and distinctly and independently from their husbands and families**.
- It is necessary to disseminate information and awareness on the topic of child marriage and early marriage and on the damages that it causes to girls. Important topics for raising awareness and education on in the different communities at risk are the issues of **reproductive rights and sexuality**.
- The strategy for **intervention should take into account the social and economic factors that determine the state of vulnerability, which will impact on the occurring of VAW and HRV**. Therefore socio- economic rights of women and girls should be promoted, like access of **young girls** to the various grades of education must be encouraged, economic incentives and access to work and economic independence should be promoted.
- **Promoting interventions and protection of women with due respect to their culture** and identity and with their direct participation and empowerment.
- Ensure **direct involvement of interested communities** at risk and elimination of stereotyping and blaming attitudes, stigma and discrimination.
- Guaranteeing the involvement of **all persons from the vulnerable communities** in the prevention activities- men, women, all ages and positions.
- Promoting joint work of NGOs dealing with protection of violence in communities at risk, including Roma NGOs and groups and ensuring financing of such initiatives and programmes.
- The media perception and portraying of women victims of violence as passive and defenseless objects of violence should be modified. The media should be more focused on highlighting the negative image of the perpetrator of the violence instead.
- In order to avoid the reinforcement of prejudices, stereotypes and cultural oriented discrimination against women from communities at risk, misleading use of information on instances of VAW and HRV must be avoided and forbidden, where necessary.
- Ensure adequate and regular training for media representatives at all levels both through state institutions and agencies **and by NGOs which are most specialized** on issues of GBV and HRV.



- Respect balance in integration appeals to communities at risk and avoid the imposition of social organization models in which integration implies the loss of identity and cultural self-references, as it could be a risk factor for the reproduction of harmful practices as a way of expressing traditions in order to maintain the bonds with the origin communities. **A more balanced attitude towards communities at risk will avoid putting women and girls more at risk** of forms of violence perpetrated as a counterpoint to a mainstream culture.
- To bear in mind and to pay attention at all levels of intervention- legislative, policy intervention, concrete work on cases of HRV, the contacts of the communities at risk with the country of origin, in order **to avoid further violence, including trans-border cases of violence** against women and girls.
- In order to attack HRV and stereotypes which surround HRV cases it is necessary **to tackle deeply rooted stereotypes** in society itself that make the environment for GBV and prejudice and stereotypes with regard to communities at risk of discrimination.
- Tackling the problem and instances of HRV as a phenomenon at the intersection of various and topical current political issues- by adequate migration policies, by **exposing and countering discrimination, xenophobia, islamophobia and extremism and fundamentalism** in all their forms and manifestations.
- **Create and sustain an environment and culture of intolerance to all forms of violence** and human rights violations and send a clear message that no cultural and religious relativism is acceptable when human rights are at stake.
- Ensure increased attention to the role of men and boys also from vulnerable communities and **making them factors for change**.
- Promoting networking and alliances between NGOs and other actors at regional, national and international levels.
- In tackling GBV and HRV **to step on already created resources** - practices, methods, courses, materials, manuals and guidelines, e- resources from partner countries and in Europe.
- To promote cooperation between European countries **for creating harmonized standards and practices and for effective trans-border interventions**, as well as keeping contacts also with institutions and organizations from countries of origin of some minority and migrant communities.

