RESOLUTION ON THE
2009-2014 NATIONAL PROGRAMME
ON PREVENTION
OF FAMILY VIOLENCE
On the basis of Article 11 of the Family Violence Act (OG RS, no. 16/08), the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted, at the meeting dated May 27th 2009, the

RESOLUTION ON THE 2009-2014 NATIONAL PROGRAMME ON PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

I. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

1. INTRODUCTION

Family violence occurs regardless of the socio-economic situation, sex, age, ethnic affiliation or other personal circumstances of family members (following: members). According to the Family Violence Act (OG RS, no. 16/08), violence is the use of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence of one family member against the other, or negligence of a family member. In this case, it is a question of abuse of social power and the need for domination and control by one person over another. Such behavioural patterns are the result of uneven distribution of power between the sexes and between parents and children. Family violence is frequent in relationships that allow family violence or even accept it as socially acceptable behaviour.

Family, as the fundamental community, should be a safe environment that enables the satisfaction of basic biological, mental and social needs. When it is not working as a safe environment, the largest harm is incurred to the most vulnerable members, which definitely include children. Children don’t have developed defence mechanisms that would provide them protection against destructive influences of the environment, as is in the case of adults. Children also don’t have social power to seek assistance outside the family or to find a different home. The eldest family members and disabled persons are also frequently in such a situation. Statistics also indicate that women are even more frequently exposed to family violence. A large contribution factor to that is our patriarchal society, in which men hold a higher socio-economic position.

Family violence can come in various forms: physical attack, compelling someone into having sexual intercourse, sexual abuse, rape, threats, intimidation, economic violence, abandonment of obligatory care or negligence and similar. However, such violence is still frequently considered solely as a personal matter. “Order of silence” or excessive loyalty is extremely harmful and non-ethical when abuse or violence occurs within a family. Order of silence is so destructive mostly due to the fact that it demands the loyalty of victims, which narrows the circle of violence within a family and makes assistance from the outside environment and competent authorities impossible.

Family violence is a common social problem infringing on basic human rights. Such a view of family violence is also expressed in the Penal Code (PC-1, OG RS, no. 55/08 and 66/08) that
entered into force on 1 November 2008. In the chapter Criminal offences against marriage, family and children, family violence is stipulated as an independent criminal offence.

International human rights law must be, in its entirety, transferred to national law in order to enable efficient preventive and curative measures in connection with family violence. The obligation of the state is, among others, to point to, prevent, research, solve and punish violence. States that allow violations of human rights in the private sphere and do not consider and punish them are violating the obligation to protect human rights arising from international law.

The key element in the definition of family violence is that one person is misusing his/her domination over another within a special emotional relationship. Such an emotional relationship can arise from family relations or partnership (matrimonial, non-matrimonial, same-sex partnership). Even though research indicates that the most frequent victims of family violence are women and children, the national programme is not limited to only their protection, but also incorporates the protection of male victims, violence against elder family members and abuse against persons with physical, sensory and intellectual impairment.

Resolution on the 2009-2014 National Programme on Prevention of Family Violence (following: National Programme) is a strategic document that stipulates the objectives, measures and key policy makers for the prevention and reduction of family violence in the Republic of Slovenia for the period from 2009 to 2014. The fundamental objectives of this document are to connect the measures of various sectors and to ensure efficient activities to reduce family violence at the level of identification and prevention. Definite tasks and activities for the attainment of objectives and implementation of individual measures will be stipulated in action plans (Article 12 of the Family Violence Act), which will be created every two years and will specify the deadlines and implementation methods.

2. LEGAL BASES

The essential act for the preparation of the national programme will be the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (Constitution, OG RS, no. 33/91, 42/97, 66/00, 24/03, 69/04, 69/04, 69/04 and 68/06). The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia determines that Slovenia is a democratic republic governed by the rule of law and a social state that guarantees human rights and fundamental freedoms of all, irrespective of their ethnicity, race, gender, faith, political or other conviction, material standing, birth, education, social status, or any other personal circumstance. According to the Constitution, everyone has the right to personal dignity and safety, the inviolability of the physical and mental integrity of every person, his privacy and personality rights will be guaranteed. The state will protect family, motherhood, fatherhood, children and youth and will create the necessary conditions for such protection. Marriage is based on the equality of spouses. Children in the Republic of Slovenia will enjoy special protection as well as human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with their age and maturity.

The Republic of Slovenia obtained direct legal basis for the adoption of the national programme with the Family Violence Act, which emphasises three fundamental intentions:
1. Definition of family violence – experts from various areas who are faced with victims and perpetrators of violence through their work have, so far, not had a clear legal definition of this phenomenon, which would be a helpful starting point for their work.

2. Definition of a network of authorities and organisations who consider the cases of family violence – clear definition of rules and procedures that ensure harmonised functioning of authorities and organisations when considering such cases.

3. Definition of measures for the protection of victims of family violence – victims of legal age make their own decisions regarding whether or not to exercise the measures in court. Some are already stipulated in other sectoral laws; for instance, the Civil Procedure Act (ZPP, OG RS, no. 73/07-UPB3, 101/07 – decision of the Constitutional Court, 102/07 – decision of the Constitutional Court, 45/08, 62/08 – decision of the Constitutional Court, 111/08 – decision of the Constitutional Court), the Police Act (Zpol, OG RS, no. 107/06 - UPB6 and 14/07 – ZVS) and the PC-1 and Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP, OG RS, no. 32/07-UPB4, 21/08 – decision of the Constitutional Court, 65/08 – decision of the Constitutional Court, 68/08 and 89/08 – decision of the Constitutional Court). This way, measures in the Family Violence Act are only supplementing the existing measures, while not replacing them or reducing their importance. This emphasis is especially important for the protection of juvenile victims of family violence. Protection of deprived children, which also includes juvenile victims of family violence, is governed by the Marriage and Family Relations Act (ZZZDR, OG RS, no. 69/04-UPB1, 101/07 – decision of the Constitutional Court, and 122/07 – decision of the Constitutional Court), while also being systematically stipulated in family legislation irrespective of the type or source of danger. However, protection of children also demands different measures, since it is the obligation of the state to act in the child’s best interests irrespective of his/her wishes or expectations. Therefore, the Family Violence Act, with regard to measures for the protection of juvenile victims, refers to the legislation governing family relations.

3. COMPARATIVE LEGAL PRACTICES OF MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, UNO AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Violence as a universal problem is a general violation of fundamental human rights, including the right to life, safety, dignity, protection against physical and mental injuries, equality in family and to the highest possible standard of physical and mental health. In 1993, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the first international instrument of human rights dealing exclusively with the issue of violence against women. It emphasises that this violence presents a violation of human rights and basic freedoms of women and brings forward the responsibility of governments for their protection. Violence occurs in a family (family violence, sexual mutilations, injuries to sex organs, castration) and in general society (rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, slavery in households, forced prostitution, trade in women and children, sexual tourism). Violence of men against women was, for a long time, an “invisible phenomenon”, but in the 70s and 80s, it become visible in Western countries. The establishment of shelters, non-governmental women’s organisations and counselling services for women who want to protect themselves
and their children against sexual violence (rape in and outside of partnerships, sexual abuse of children), brought home the message that such violence presents a violation of the integrity of an individual. Until then, it had been understood only as a private social and not a fundamental social problem.


Article 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms emphasises the respect of private and public life, while Articles 16 and 17 of the European Social Charter especially stipulate the right of a family to social, legal and economic protection with emphasis on the right of mothers and children to social and economic security. Decision no. 56000-1/2008/3 of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, as of 24 December 2008, which refers to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, imposes that the competent ministries and government offices study the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and adopt measures for their timely and efficient implementation.

In January 2008, the European Parliament adopted the resolution (INI/2007/2093 – Towards an European Union Strategy on the Rights of the Child) that, on the basis of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, proposes to member states to exclude from their media programmes all harmful contents for children and youth that encourage violence, including the marketing of violent video games and accessibility to pornographic web pages (consequently, sexual abuse of children).

The protection of children against cruel treatment is incorporated in numerous documents of the Council of Europe, which consider children as an especially vulnerable group as well as considering the attitude towards victims. The above recommendations are the basis for the acceptance that the issue of family violence demands action in member states as well as at the international level. Recommendation, no. R (90) 2 on social measures in connection to family violence incorporates general prevention and special measures. At both levels, it emphasises the need for special treatment of children and elderly persons due to their larger vulnerability and smaller chances of actual problem-solving of family violence. Also in Slovenia, expert discussions have frequently overlooked the elderly population facing violence within the family. The Council of Europe has recently formed a group of experts for the implementation and continuation of the 2002 recommendation (Recommendation 5 (2002) of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the protection of women against violence), which considers all aspects of violence against women, including sexual violence.
The Convention of the Council of Europe on measures against violence against women and in the family was in the preparation phase.

There aren’t many acts that directly govern family violence in member states of the European Union. However, there are not exactly legally binding recommendations and guidelines\(^1\) that have been adopted by the Council of Europe, but there have been resolutions adopted and published by European Parliament\(^2\); these indicate that the criminalisation of family violence is generally accepted and necessary in order for individual member states to fulfil their obligations to the European Union. In this way, it is emphasised that family violence must be stipulated and considered as a criminal offence, while appropriate legal, financial and psychological assistance should be provided to persons who have experienced violence (Recommendation 1582, 2002). In general, special attention has been paid to family violence in the European Council, since the first recommendation, no. R (85) 4, on family violence, referring to psychological, social, criminological and legal aspects from this area was already adopted in 1985.

The Council of Europe and the Organisation of United Nations propose to states to change the existing national legislation, since the latter determines the entire framework of the consideration of family violence and the influencing of reactions to violence. It was also recommended that police, health care, schools and social work centres (following: SWC) be encouraged to form a harmonised action plan that will define activities for the prevention of family violence and support for the victims of violence.

Legal provisions that govern family violence must be clear and directed towards immediate physical separation of victims from perpetrators as well as possible elimination of perpetrators from common households. Police representatives, who are frequently the first to take action at the location of violence, must provide precise and clear instructions of such measures, while further measures directed towards the protection of a person who experienced violence, must be implemented in cooperation with other competent authorities and organisations. The introduction of the supervision of implementation of measures is also important.

Systematic consideration of family violence is a measure directed towards a comprehensive check of competence and mutual cooperation of various institutions. Austria and Germany were among the first countries to successfully introduce comprehensive and systematic solutions of family violence with inter-institutional cooperation along with harmonised legislative changes.

The action plan as the operationalisation of the national programme usually stipulates specific objectives. The adoption of this plan as the continuation of a national programme is also proposed in the recommendations of the European Union and has already been adopted in some countries (Finland, Spain, Norway, Belgium, Great Britain). In most cases, it

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2 Npr. Resolution on the report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the state of women’s health in the European Community.
is formed through cooperation of non-governmental organisations and it supplements the legislation that refers to family violence. In Belgium, as an example of good practice from this area, the prevention of family violence is a national priority task – in their own action plan (2001) they adopted various measures for the prevention, punishment and support of victims as well as measures that refer to violent persons.

One of the larger problems in developed society is inconsistent implementation of acts or recommendations in force; in other words, a large gap between acts and their implementation exists. Besides the changes in legislation, a big challenge to some countries is the assurance of efficient implementation. The formation of a special authority has been demonstrated as a good measure from this point of view; for instance, the intervention centres for the prevention of family violence in Austria. These centres provide assistance and support to victims of family violence and connect all the involved parties – police, judicial administration, youth organisations, shelters for women, etc. An intervention centre as a non-governmental organisation is in close contact with state authorities (mostly with police), which provide assistance to persons who have experienced violence; in this way, it contributes to the implementation of measures that refer to the rights of victims of violence. Another function provided by these centres is assistance and support to victims during the judicial process.

Modelled after Norway, which established an action plan for the prevention of family violence in 2000, it would be meaningful to establish an intermediary group in Slovenia that would take care of changes in this area. The Norwegian group, which also includes representatives of ministries, harmonises general actions for the prevention of family violence as well as numerous others from the action programme. One of them was the introduction of a working group, the objective of which was to affect some changes in legislation. More attention was paid to the education of professional workers dealing with family violence and perpetrators of violence.

A similar function is also performed by the Irish National Committee for the Prevention of Violence against Women, which was established in 1997. Within its framework, they are trying to form, develop and implement media campaigns at regional and local levels as well as inside regional and local structures. Women especially are encouraged to seek assistance and to report violence and its perpetrators. The committee also has a harmonising and counselling role for the distribution of funds, conducts the development of various policies and works in this area.

4. EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION

Family violence occurs in private spaces, which is why it remains hidden and is harder to recognise than violence exercised in public spaces. Professional services normally identify various forms of family violence after it has been going on for some time, which frequently leaves fatal consequences behind.

The most frequent problems when establishing the scope and types of family violence are:
– insufficient social sensitivity for this type of violence;
– inconsistency of reporting acts of violence (due to shame, fear, self-accusation, bad accessibility to services or fear against reactions), which is why many acts of violence aren’t identified and remain unpunished;
– non-harmonised action of competent services or inappropriate integrity of their records;
– slow reactions of competent services in individual cases;
– elderly persons are especially afraid and ashamed to report and admit to competent authorities that they have been victims of family violence, since they are dependent on the perpetrators for the satisfaction of physical needs;
– inconsistency of competent authorities in the endeavour towards larger awareness and sensitivity regarding family violence;
– insufficient programme selection according to the needs of users;
– uneven coverage of the Slovenian territory with assistance programmes to persons who have experienced family violence and programmes for perpetrators of violence;
– insufficient distribution of funds at the national and local level for integrated financing of programmes for persons who have experienced family violence.

At the national level, various forms of assistance (SWC, non-governmental organisations, phones, Internet) are at the disposal of victims; however, their accessibility (especially programmes of non-governmental organisations) is unevenly divided by areas. The issue of accessibility of suitable assistance programmes is especially important for:
- disabled persons: they doubt that other persons will believe them (probably due to the common belief that no one would exercise violence against a disabled person), they might have problems with communication or physical access to services that could help them and they are dependent of the help of other family members;
- inhabitants of agricultural areas: problems of access to competent services due to geographic isolation (the problems of mobility and control by the perpetrator of violence)
- socially endangered persons: worse access to services due to lack of funds;
- immigrants and refugees (who can be victims of men from their own or host community or armed men): due to limited language knowledge, culture or available services;
- persons whose status of residence is bound to their partner.

4.1 Official statistics

4.1.1 Police

The only authority in Slovenia that collected official statistics in this area until the adoption of the Family Violence Act was the Ministry of the Interior – the Police. The actions of police officers in cases of violence are complex. Firstly, family in all its forms belongs simultaneously to the private and public sphere. Therefore, a state intervention must respect the right to private life. Secondly, family violence is firmly rooted in the traditions of the patriarch Slovenian community.
The police, who are usually the first to respond, must protect the victim of family violence against direct danger along with advising victims of possible assistance for a solution. Article 39a of the Police Act gives the police the opportunity to forbid the perpetrator approachability to a specific place or person. This measure can be imposed following reasonable suspicion that a criminal offence or offence with elements of violence was committed, if the perpetrator was caught during a criminal offence or misdemeanour, or in case of reasonable suspicion that he/she will endanger the life, personal safety or freedom of another person with whom he/she is or was in a close relationship. Such police actions also have symbolic importance, as they point out to the gravity of an act of violence and emphasise the perpetrator’s responsibility. It is important to ensure the permanent behaviour change of the perpetrator, provide assistance to the victim (with children) who experienced violence, process the traumatic experience and ensure that all of society views violence as an unacceptable form of behaviour.

Since 1999, in each identified criminal offence, the police have defined the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim of violence. In 2000, 1502 criminal offences of family violence were identified; 1952 in 2001, 2224 in 2002, 2837 in 2003, 2607 in 2004, 3009 in 2005, 2999 in 2006 and 4329 in 2007. The data clearly indicates that the number of such indicated/reported criminal offences is abruptly increasing. The reason for this is probably greater awareness and attention of the public and not increased family violence. In the recent period, there has been a lot of discussion about violence, the inadmissibility of such acts is being emphasised, numerous conferences are being organised and the media are extensively covering this topic. In accordance with the increase of family violence criminal offences, the number of suspects and victims is increasing as well (Table 1).

Table 1: The number of suspects and victims of family violence criminal offences in the period from 2000–2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of suspects</th>
<th>Number of victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1199</td>
<td>1392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1447</td>
<td>1670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1656</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>2251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>2284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2110</td>
<td>2413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2103</td>
<td>2450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2289</td>
<td>2714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2 Statistics of social work centres (SWC)

SWCs, whose public authorisation and tasks are based on the Social Assistance Act (ZSV, OG RS, no. 3/07-UPB2, 23/07, 41/07, 122/07 – decision of the Constitutional Court), were, with the implementation of the Family Violence Act, assigned the additional task of collecting personal data for legal processing, as well as collecting data in accordance with the Act
governing Social Assistance. Therefore, the statistics of SWCs are also important for the preparation of the national programme. The statistics clearly indicate the number of interventions in cases of children in 2007, the first social assistance and the situation in safe houses, maternity homes and crisis centres for children and youth.

In 2007, SWCs considered 4012 children who experienced violence throughout Slovenia: 1316 due to suspicion of mishandling, 1098 due to negligence, 814 were victims of psychological violence and 369 of physical violence; 266 children were considered due to suspicion of a criminal offence and 149 were victims of sexual abuse. Detailed data by regions are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Review of SWC data on cases of violence – interventions in cases of children in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Negligence</th>
<th>Psychological violence</th>
<th>Physical violence</th>
<th>Suspicion of mishandling</th>
<th>Suspicion of criminal offences</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1098</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1316</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obalno-kraška</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorenjska</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goriška</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savinjska</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East Slovenia</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomurska</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notranjsko-kraška</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podravska</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koroška</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spodneposavska</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zasavska</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osrednjeslovenska</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Slovenia, there are 24 safe-houses and maternity homes for women, providing approximately 110 rooms and 330 beds; however, it has to be emphasised that maternity homes fundamentally aren’t intended for the solving of family violence issues. Besides the indicated programmes (Tables 3 and 4), there are some other social assistance programmes within the framework of prevention of violence. The Resolution on the 2006-2010 National Social Assistance Programme (OG RS, no. 39/06) stipulates until the year 2010 the expansion of the network by all statistic regions to the total capacity of 350 places.

Table 3 provides the data on the number of users of maternity homes. The data indicates that the occupancy in December 2008 has increased by 30% since December 2007.
Table 3: The number of users of maternity homes (MH) in Slovenia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme operator</th>
<th>Programme title</th>
<th>No. of rooms</th>
<th>No. of beds</th>
<th>Occupancy in December 2007</th>
<th>Occupancy in December 2008</th>
<th>The amount of financing in 2008 (EUR)</th>
<th>The amount of financing in 2009 (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MH Višnja Gora</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karitas Samarijan Institute (2007–11)</td>
<td>MH Solkan</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>67 760.46</td>
<td>75 891.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MH na Cesti</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWC Ljubljana Šiška (2008–12)</td>
<td>MH Ljubljana</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>69 802.37</td>
<td>72 485.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talita kum (2007–11)</td>
<td>MH Postojna (2007)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26 584.02</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWC Maribor (2007–11)</td>
<td>MH Maribor. residential house</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80 532.66</td>
<td>90 196.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MH Jalovec. residential house</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadškofija karitas Maribor (one year)</td>
<td>MH Mozirje and Žalec</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25 400.00</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>139</strong></td>
<td><strong>84</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>410 432.93</strong></td>
<td><strong>390 850.82</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Explanation in Table 4*

Table 4: The number of users of safe-houses (SH) in Slovenia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme operator</th>
<th>Programme title</th>
<th>No. of rooms</th>
<th>No. of beds</th>
<th>Occupancy in December 2007</th>
<th>Occupancy in December 2008</th>
<th>The amount of financing in 2008 (EUR)</th>
<th>The amount of financing in 2009 (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional safe-house Celje society</td>
<td>Regional SH Celje</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>149 617.66</td>
<td>167 571.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SH Velenje</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2008–12)</td>
<td>SH Slovenj Gradec</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWC Maribor (2006–10)</td>
<td>SH Maribor – assistance in case of family violence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>88 224.76</td>
<td>98 811.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society Life without violence, Novo mesto</td>
<td>SH Novo mesto (2007)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>59 199.65</td>
<td>66 303.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society of safe shelter, Ljutomer (2007–11)</td>
<td>SH for women and children. victims of violence (2007)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>60 939.03</td>
<td>68 251.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWC Krško</td>
<td>Shelter Pepcl dom (2007)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37 064.02</td>
<td>41 511.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society (2008–12)</td>
<td>Crisis centre for women. counselling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100 996.96</td>
<td>118 809.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society SOS phone (2008–12)</td>
<td>Shelter for women and children, victims of violence</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>85 615.69</td>
<td>90 196.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWC Ptuj (2008–12)</td>
<td>SH Ptuj</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56 598.12</td>
<td>63 389.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society for non-violent communicati (2008–12)</td>
<td>SH for women and children, victims of violence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47 296.16</td>
<td>52 971.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karitas Samarijan Institute (one year)</td>
<td>SH Karitas for Primorska</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29 766.26</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td><strong>191</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
<td><strong>777 497.61</strong></td>
<td><strong>837 458.93</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs annual publishes an invitation to tender for the implementation of social assistance programmes. This invitation to tender co-finances programmes for a longer period (five years); the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs already concluded the contracts and allocated the funds to those who already have the decision on the multiannual co-financing for 2009. The Ministry shall also co-finance programmes for shorter periods (one-year) – the invitation to tender is still open and the funds haven’t been allocated yet.
Table 4 contains the data on the number of users of safe-houses in Slovenia. The difference in the occupancy of safe-houses between December 2007 and December 2008 is smaller than in maternity homes, since occupancy in safe-houses only increased by 1.6%.

The criteria for the programmes of maternity homes and shelters for women are the number of users, the variety of activities of an individual operator and the necessary material costs needed for the implementation of a programme. In the allocation of funds for maternity homes and shelters for women, the capacity and specificity of a programme are also considered (for instance, operating at various locations, provisions of standby service in crisis accommodations).

In Slovenia, we have seven crisis centres for youth; namely, in Celje, Krško, Lj. Bežigrad, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Radovljica and Slovenj Gradec, as well as one for children up to the age of 6 in Grosuplje, which has been operating since 1 September 2007. Table 6 indicates that, in 2008, social assistance was offered to 1228 children and juveniles, while 420 children and juveniles resided in crisis centres for youth in 2008. In 2008, the total number of overnight stays was 5912, while the average length of stay in a crisis centre for youth was 14.47 days; in the criteria of average number of days of residence of a child, the crisis centre for youth in Murska Sobota stands out.

According to statistical data from 2007 (Table 5), the number of users of social assistance in 2008 increased by more than one half; namely, by 60.02%; the number of all overnight stays in a crisis centre for youth increased as well (by 14%), while the same can be claimed for the average number of days of residence of a child (by 27%). The number of children and juveniles who resided in a crisis centre for youth decreased from 2007 to 2008; however, it was only by 1.9%.

**Table 5:** The statistics of users of crisis centres for youth (KCM) in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of users of first social assistance</th>
<th>Number of children and youth who resided in crisis centres for youth</th>
<th>Number of all stays</th>
<th>Average number of days of residence of a child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>5103</td>
<td>10.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6:** The statistics of users of crisis centres for youth (KCM) in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>Number of users of first social assistance</th>
<th>Number of children and youth who resided in crisis centres for youth</th>
<th>Number of all stays</th>
<th>Average number of days of residence of a child or juvenile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CELJE</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1088</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROSUPLJE</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>13.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KRŠKO</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>14.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LJ. BEŽIGRAD</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>10.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARIBOR</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>12.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MURSKA SOBOTA</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RADOVLJICA</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>9.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLOVENJ GRADEC</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1228</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>5912</td>
<td>115.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With regard to data on crisis centres for youth, it has to be emphasised that the data incorporates all users who seek shelter in a crisis centre for youth for short-term accommodation, even though violence is not always the cause. Other causes for use of these centres are educational problems or cases when children are left without parents – as a transitional period prior to going to a foster family or institution.

4.1.3 Cooperation of ministries in additional activities

In March 2006, for the first time, in order to prevent violence, ensure efficient assistance in cases of violence against children and successful awareness regarding these issues, the partnership of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and Ministry of Education and Sport carried out a common project entitled “Adults are here to help” for all elementary school pupils.

As part of the project, all elementary school pupils received an information brochure with key information on various forms of violence, including contacts for counselling and assistance as well as the key message that in cases of violence, it is necessary to turn to trustworthy adults who will help them out of the situation. Moreover, one class was dedicated exclusively to the issue of violence, causes and consequences of violent relationships as well as types of assistance. In this way, pupils obtained information about their basic rights and respecting the rights of others, the knowledge of how to recognise violence and how to act in cases of experiencing, observing or committing violence, as well as information regarding who to turn to in case of possible violence at school, playgrounds or at home.

It is important that the state ensures that various opportunities for children and youth are known and accessible to them and that they should notify their parents, who can help them and are obliged to do so in connection with their problems and distress. Therefore, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs adopted a decision within the project entitled “Adults are here to help” to open and finance a free-of-charge anonymous blue number (080 1552) – Peter Klepec phone, which children and youth can call in case of possible violence. Children were informed about this option in the mentioned brochure and class. Besides accessibility, such forms of assistance can enable a child or juvenile to remain anonymous, which increases the feeling of safety. Even though this is not personal contact, direct dialogue with a qualified expert is established and that expert directs the conversation and encourages a child or juvenile to find possible solutions. This way the child also has the opportunity to participate in planning the assistance, which significantly contributes to his/her active role in finding a way out of the situation.

Since crisis centres for youth are intended for children and juveniles, who, for various reasons (especially due to unbearable conditions in a family frequently connected with violence and abuse), find themselves in a stressful situation, the centres are accessible 24 hours a day, while phone calls are redirected from the free-of-charge blue number to the closest of the seven crisis centres for youth. Besides professional support and counselling to children and youth, the advantage of involvement of these centres in such a form of assistance is also that they can offer immediate safe accommodation if necessary.
4.2 Non-governmental organisations

Since the end of the 80s, non-governmental organisations primarily dealt with violence against women and children as the most frequent victims of family violence and victims in general; they were also the first ones to develop special professional forms of assistance. Until the mid 90s, family violence was not a traditional topic of social welfare institutions. The state has begun to finance these programmes by regular public tenders of social assistance to the extent stipulated in the 2006-2010 Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme. In the network of assistance to victims of violence, various programmes are operating: maternity homes (which primarily aren’t intended for these victims), safe houses, shelters and crisis centres for the victims of violence. The state is co-financing ten maternity homes, 13 safe-houses and three crisis centres. Various programmes for psychosocial assistance and crisis phones are operating for the victims of violence as well as a special counselling programme for the perpetrators of acts of violence.

Future invitations to tender will be directed towards the encouragement of new forms of assistance for the victims of violence with special needs along with programmes for work with the perpetrators of violence. The next social assistance resolution will follow the further development of the network of non-governmental organisations for preventing family violence.

4.3 Research

In connection with family violence, research of various types of violence that are geographically, timely, substantively or disciplinarily limited was rarely carried out. The only extensive empirical research of this sort was carried out by the Scientific-research centre of the University of Koper in Primorska and the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana on behalf of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. Within the context of the project “Analysis of family violence in Slovenia – proposals of prevention and measures”, an opinion survey, “Family violence”, was prepared and carried out on the representative sample of inhabitants of legal age in the Republic of Slovenia. The size of the final (surveyed) sample was 1006 persons. The Faculty of Social Sciences conducted an analysis of the media presentation of family violence. With the purpose of determining the needs of victims of violence, types of violence, threshold of violence, who the especially vulnerable groups are, what is the frequency of violence, estimation of the adequacy and efficiency of the response of competent institutions and, consequently, the establishment of the data collection system, the Government Office for Equal Opportunities and the police are co-financing partners of the project “Incidence of violence” and will, together, respond to violence in the private sphere and partnerships within the context of the target-research programme, which started its implementation in 2008 and will be finished in 2011.

4.3.1 Family violence

Experts of the Scientific-research centre of the University of Koper in Primorska formed a questionnaire comprised of eight substantive sets and 67 questions.
To the question of whether they have personally experienced family violence, 23.7% of interviewed persons answered positively and 76.3%, negatively. Among those who have personally experienced family violence, 73% of interviewed persons declared that this happened in the family in which they grew up, while 38.6% said that it happened in the family in which they lived as adults (in other words, some experienced violence in their childhood and some in their partnerships). Statistically significant differences in answers according to gender of the interviewed persons indicate that among those who have personally experienced violence in the family in which they lived as adults, there are significantly more women (71.4%; men, 28.6%).

Among interviewed persons, 33.1% know at least one family in which a slap to a child is the usual punishment; 56.1% know at least one family in which screaming at a child presents an everyday form of communication; 22.4% know at least one family in which at least one form of violence against women is carried out and 7.5% know at least one family in which violence against the husband is committed. The majority of interviewed persons (86.4%) are not familiar with any family in which violence against elderly persons is exerted.

Table 7: Positions on violence of individual acts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the following act an act of violence?</th>
<th>Yes (in %)</th>
<th>No (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slap</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection of pockets</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal humiliation of an individual</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening of letters</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control over financial funds of a partner</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcing into sexual intercourse</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to the opinion of interviewed persons, the most frequent victims of violence are women (77.9%) and children (71.4%) and, rarely, elderly persons (24.5%), parents (19.4%) and men (2.6%). Interviewed persons listed physical violence as the most frequent type, followed by psychological, sexual and economic violence. The interviewed persons also had to state whether an individual act was abusive or not. The answers are presented in Table 7.

When the interviewed persons would surely call the police was also determined: 55.7% would call if their neighbour beat his/her child, 48.5%, if they knew about psychological violence against a child, 40.7%, if they knew about physical violence against a husband or wife and 70.6%, in case of physical violence against an elderly person. According to the opinion of interviewed persons, media are extremely important for spreading awareness in society on the seriousness of family violence issues, since 87.7% of interviewed persons said that they obtain information on this area from the media. 58.5% of interviewed persons claimed that the media have a positive role in informing the public on family violence, since they disclose problems and expose perpetrators of violence who would otherwise remain hidden. According to the opinion of some interviewed persons, a public hearing leads to quicker punishment of the perpetrators of violence. 13.4% of interviewed persons think that
the media have a negative role on these topics because they exaggerate, writing in a sensationalistic manner in order to attract audience and raise readership or ratings. One third (39%) of answers disclose the opinion that the media sufficiently consider the right of personal data protection of a victim, while one third disagree (29.3%).

Research also verified how efficient the methods of the implementation of preventive campaigns are. According to opinions of interviewed persons, the most efficient method is the introduction of stricter sanctions for perpetrators (81.1% of interviewed persons), while the least efficient are: distribution of bulletins and leaflets, big posters, radio advertisements and web advertising. The majority were familiar with the existence of the anonymous helpline (97.9%) and organisations for the assistance to the victims of family violence (94.8%); however, not many interviewed persons actually knew someone who used the anonymous helpline (9.7%) or sought assistance from one of the organisations (9.2%). If the interviewed persons became victims of family violence, they would first turn to their friends, (39.1%), the police (36.7%), other family members (30.8%), SWCs or counselling services (26.5%), the anonymous helpline (22.2%) or a family doctor or specialist (13.8%).

The interviewed persons who don’t accept divorce as an option indicated a larger level of tolerance of individual acts of violence such as a slap, inspection of pockets, verbal humiliation, opening of a letter, control over financial funds of a partner and forcing into sexual intercourse, while also being more oriented towards the victimisation of victims (a woman hit by her husband is the one to be blamed), excusing or justification of violence (hit due to jealousy means true love) and mitigation of acts of violence (forbidding contact with others is not an act of violence).

Those who believe that the husband should have a dominant role in the family expressed a higher level of tolerance for individual acts of violence. At the same time, the answers indicated differences between those who are religious and regularly attend religious ceremonies and those who are religious, but don’t attend religious ceremonies, and those who are not religious at all; the former express a higher level of tolerance for individual acts of violence, especially those dealing not with direct physical, but psychological violence or interference with privacy (for instance, inspection of pockets, opening of letters, control over financial funds, intimidation).

The interviewed persons who agreed with the statement that home care is more in the domain of women expressed a higher level of tolerance for individual acts of violence in comparison to those who didn’t agree (for instance, verbal humiliation of an individual is an act of violence for 78.7% of those who agreed with the statement and for 92% of those who didn’t agree; forcing into sexual intercourse is an act of violence for 85% of those who agree with the statement and for 96.8% of those who didn’t agree).

4.3.2 Media presentation of family violence

Experts of the Social Communication Research Centre at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana created a report in which they analysed the emergence of family violence in Slovenian media in the period from 1985 to 2006. The report states the following conclusions:
the number of articles on family violence increased by almost three times from 1985 until 2005;
three quarters of all stories in printed media have been published in the pages of crime and similar topics; violence is mostly reported as an event (for instance, murder, fight, rape) and only exceptionally as an important social problem with wider background information. With this, the media is contributing to greater awareness about family violence, but are not enabling and may even be blocking criticism and the questioning of reasons for family violence;
sexual violence hasn’t been sufficiently presented in any of the analysed periods. There also aren’t enough scientific articles on this issue in the public media;
individual stories, through linguistic means, frequently legitimate the act of violence (mostly men) of a perpetrator or deal more with the question of guilt (mostly in the case of women) of the victim instead of dealing with the perpetrator, which creates the impression that the victim could’ve influenced the act of violence, while the latter and the reasons for it are not sufficiently analysed;
a questionnaire conducted among journalists confirms the conclusions obtained by the analysis of articles – since substantially higher values of the average statement were achieved by otherwise low support of the most obvious myths – that violence is caused by alcohol and drugs, it is connected with low economic status of the family, all family members (not only the perpetrator of violence) need to change in order to stop violence and the women is also partly to be blamed by not leaving her partner, which is also very frequently reflected in articles on family violence.

Experts state some important guidelines for this area. In media reporting on family violence, the praxis that family violence frequently results from external reasons and not from the perpetrator of family violence should be changed. Television broadcasting organisations, especially, should be encouraged to depict positive social values, especially due to their proven strong media influence on the formation of behaviour patterns, sexual roles and, consequently, stereotypical behaviour. Violence shouldn’t be shown in television productions for children (cartoons, movies for children). Public awareness on the problem of family violence increases the individual’s sensitivity to this phenomenon. Special efforts through wider public discussion should be directed towards vulnerable social groups so they will be properly equipped and informed.

5. STRATEGY FOR THE POLICY AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE

5.1 Basic principles and starting points against family violence

The national programme is a document that covers a wider area of family violence. Special attention is devoted to violence against groups who are particularly exposed: children, women, elderly persons, disabled persons and persons who are not able to take care of themselves due to special circumstances. The document considers the special needs of victims and their personal circumstances. The basic principles and starting points against family violence that are adopted by this document by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia are:
- violence against another person is a violation of fundamental human rights and must be considered and properly sanctioned, since there is no acceptable or permissible threshold of violence;

- family violence is a social problem based on unequal distribution of social power between genders or between the weak and the stronger;

- when considering family violence caused mostly by married, unmarried or former partners and parents or foster parents, the state will consider that, due to special relationships of family members (love, trust, dependence...) and abuse of these circumstances by the perpetrator, this sort of violence must be considered with the same strictness as violence caused by unknown persons;

- the state will adopt measures for the prevention of violence (due diligence) and ensure systematic protection for victims regardless of the perpetrator of an act of violence.

The state will strive for the preparation and planning, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of national policies against family violence and violence in society in general, which will be based on:

- the highest possible protection and safety for the victims of violence;

- strengthening of the power of victims of violence and prevention of secondary victimisation;

- provision of access to information as well as quick and quality assistance and support;

- informing and awareness of all citizens about their rights with special emphasis on vulnerable family members (following: family members);

- establishment of criminal and civil law, which will fully consider the rights and dignity of victims and, in the long-term, contribute to the rehabilitation of victims and their family members;

- provision of special training of special workers who deal with family violence in SWCs with special emphasis on special workers in SWCs, the police, the prosecutor’s offices, the judicial administration, schools and health services and education;

- public awareness and education of children, youth and adults;

- preventive measures for all social groups;

- a procedure of solving the problems of family violence that is harmonised and victims-friendly.

The state must, through its institutions (SWC and other social assistance institutions, administrations, police, courts and prosecution offices, schools, educational institutions, institutions for serving a prison sentence, correction homes and health care institutions) and employees, operate in a preventive and curative manner in order to do everything to prevent violence. In case of violations, the state must guarantee that they are considered according to the prescribed procedures. In the future, the state will encourage the development of programmes of non-governmental organisations for the prevention of family violence by co-financing.

5.2 Purpose of the national programme

The basic purpose of the national programme is to direct the efforts of state institutions and civil society towards creating conditions and circumstances that will enable the inhabitants of the Republic of Slovenia (following: inhabitants) to live in a safe environment and lead a
The document emphasises the importance of planned and harmonised implementation of programmes for reducing family violence for victims as well as the perpetrators of violence. Well-organised operating with regard to the jurisdiction of individual state institutions and civil society that can, in any way, contribute to a decrease of family violence, will, without a doubt, contribute to more frequent reporting of acts of violence.

One of the important objectives of the national programme is to raise general sensitivity towards the problems of violence, particularly if children within a family are exposed to such violence. Efforts of authorities and organisations must be upgraded with the awareness that we are all co-responsible for the society in which we live, and that we should provide all the assistance we can to children and adults who want to leave the circle of violence.

The objectives are:

1. decrease family violence and violence in society in general;
2. increase sensitivity towards the problems of family violence;
3. ensure harmonised operating of competent authorities and organisations;
4. encourage variety, uniform accessibility, development and quality implementation of programmes for helping victims;
5. encourage variety, uniform accessibility, development and quality implementation of programmes of working with the perpetrators of violence;
6. ensure systematic awareness of children, youth and adults of their fundamental human rights and obligations as well as education for life in a society without violence, for harmony of all generation and respect of all individuals;
7. encourage awareness of those who are exposed to family violence about the possible forms of assistance and ensure their accessibility across the country;
8. ensure regular financing sources for assistance programmes.

II. DEFINITION OF PROBLEMS, CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS WITH REGARD TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

Violent behaviour causes lots of damage, not only to individuals who are faced with violence, but also to wider society, since it undermines fundamental human values and leaves long-term consequences – psychological, social and economic, while at the same decreasing the quality of life. With the adoption of the Family Violence Act, the issue of family violence became an even more recognisable problem for the entire society as well as being the responsibility of all citizens. No one should turn a blind eye to the stress of families and each citizen should contribute to the decrease of family violence and to the suspension of the closed circle of violence that has been carried from generation to generation.

The basic purpose of the national programme is to decrease the phenomenon of violence. In order to achieve this, the consistent and quick response of each individual and of institutions
and organisations, when becoming familiar with a case of family violence, is extremely important. Large efforts also need to be put forth during the period prior to the occurrence of violence; in other words, towards preventive campaigns and awareness. Persons who experience violence frequently find it impossible to normally continue with their everyday work and decently live in the circle of their closest relatives and society in general. Children who are facing family violence have difficulties with the socialisation process, which is the first condition needed for a young person to grow a well-developed personality. Therefore, those who are raised in a violent family environment frequently repeat such behaviour in their adult lives, since they internalise their family behaviour patterns. Fear, lack of self-confidence and inclination to suicide and alcohol and/or illegal drug dependence are frequently accompanying consequences of an unhappy childhood that was spent in a violent family environment. If we would like to tear apart the chain of violence, it is not enough to react at its outbreak; we must work in a preventive way.

Since family violence is a comprehensive problem, its prevention is also dependent on various factors that demand comprehensive social measures, whereby the key role is played by the partnership of operators. In the current practice, cooperation of state authorities (SWCs, counselling services in schools, police, prosecutor’s office, health care services) and the non-governmental sector is already being carried out, but so far it hasn’t been efficient enough. Prevention in the educational area is left to the individual judgment and conviction of individuals (management of kindergartens or schools, teachers) especially, whether the violence issue in kindergartens and schools is considered or not. Elementary school pupils require healthy foundations for quality mutual human relations, where there is no space left for violence. The preventive campaigns for a peaceful society need to be strengthened, since they will contribute to a rise in the quality of family lives and members, and, consequently, of society as a whole.

When developing preventive programmes, the particularities of a family need to be considered. The family is that space of an individual that presents the most intimate place, to which no one else has access. Therefore, since the majority of acts of violence occur within a family circle, it is extremely hard to raise the consciousness among people that they must react according to their strengths, even if they are not directly bound to violent relationships. According to the questionnaires, fear against possible testimony in court is the most common reason why people don’t react the way they should – with a report. With the adoption of the Family Violence Act, each individual who is aware of violence is obliged to report it to a social work centre, the police or state prosecutor’s office. An important upgrade of prevention or decrease of violence was created in the criminal law with the new Penal Code-1, which stipulates in Article 191 the act “family violence” as a criminal offence.\(^3\)

Media are an important factor in shaping the public opinion of a certain social phenomenon in connection with preventive actions against family violence. Namely, the media frequently

\(^{3}\) (1) Anyone who is mistreating other members of a family community by beating them or treating them in a painful or humiliating way, threatening them with a direct assault that is life threatening, forcing them to leave the common residence or limiting their freedom of movement, stalking them, forcing them to work or abandoning work or, by any other violent limitation of their equal rights, putting them in a subordinate position, will be punished by imprisonment of up to three years.

(2) The same punishment is stipulated for those who commit the offence referred to in the previous paragraph in some other longer-lasting living community.

(3) If the act referred to in the first paragraph is committed against a person with whom the perpetrator lived in a family or longer-lasting community that fell apart, but the act is connected with this community, the perpetrator is punished by imprisonment of up to three years.
report on acts of violence within a family without explaining the background of the story, or that a contribution would contain a note of awareness. The identity of victims, which frequently also include juveniles, has so far been completely disclosed in media reporting. When we are dealing with a child, this is a violation of the fundamental provision of the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child: all social players must operate exclusively and mostly in the best interests of the child. Article 9 of the Family Violence Act on the protection of a victim’s identity also stipulates that parents or guardian, foster parent or adoptive parent of a child must, within the context of care, protect the child against public exposure. Special protection against this type of exposure is also defined in the PC-1, which stipulates the criminal offence of “the secrecy violation of a proceeding”; namely, in the second paragraph of Article 287: One who publishes the personal data of a child involved in a judicial, administrative or other procedure, or any other information on the basis of which his/her identity could be recognised, is punished by fine or imprisonment of up to three years.

All professional workers, in all areas, who deal with the entity of family, must be aware of the importance of preventive action. Namely, with their activities, they have an opportunity to communicate the basis of zero tolerance of any type of violence. Furthermore, each professional worker can work in a preventive manner by constantly educating himself in his/her area and becoming increasingly qualified for assistance in case of violence as well as acting in a preventive way. It is hard to consider the latter in a separate way, since it is mostly dependent on the conscious decision of an individual for prevention. In accordance with the above-indicated, the national programme of preventive activities also doesn’t consider family violence in a separate way, but is consistently integrating it into all areas; therefore, it can be found in all the proposed strategies.

1.1 Objectives

1. Higher awareness and increase of the choice of practical knowledge from peaceful and constructive settlement of disputes.
2. Higher awareness of the entire population regarding human rights, recognition of types of violence and reactions against it.
3. Preventive, informative and responsible role of media in preventing family violence.
4. Changing of social and cultural behaviour patterns of both genders for the elimination of prejudice, habits and other practices that are based on the idea of superiority/subordination of genders and stereotypical roles of men and women.
5. Decrease of the risky and harmful use of alcohol and illegal drugs that can influence violent behaviour.

1.2 Strategies

1.2.1 Strategy of preventive actions in education and schooling

It is necessary to ensure the conditions that the ethical orientation of kindergartens and schools and the entire operation of schools are directed towards the encouragement of pro-social behaviour, where non-violent communication and constructive settlement of disputes
will become a self-evident practice and working principle of all individuals who are involved in education and schooling.

**Key tasks**

– to include in the curriculums of kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools contents that will contribute to the elimination of stereotypes, prejudice and contents in connection with violence issues and contents for the acquisition of pro-social skills and knowledge on non-violence and peaceful settlement of disputes;
– to include programmes of non-violence and peaceful settlement of disputes in further professional training programmes;
– to include programmes for awareness of family violence issues in teacher training programmes;
– to include contents on the prevention, identification and consideration of family violence in education programmes for health care workers at the secondary, higher and university levels.

**Operator:** Ministry of Education and Sport

1.2.2 Implementation strategy of preventive campaigns for life in society without violence

In order to achieve zero tolerance of family violence, the public must primarily get to know its dimensions, causes and consequences for the individual and for society in general. It should be acquainted also with professional views on the issues, with legislation as well as the work of state institutions and non-governmental organisations in this area. Public events in connection with issues of violence need to be prepared, as well as expert and public discussions.

**Key tasks**

– to prepare and expand the educational, awareness-building and informational material (books, studies, documentation, brochures, etc) in connection with the family violence issue, and improve the awareness of the fundamental rights of a person (inviolability of physical and psychological integrity, privacy and personal rights, right to personal dignity and safety);
– to support public events that focus on the awareness of violence and the changing of bad practice into good practice;
– to cooperate and support international initiatives and events at the level of the European Union, Council of Europe and UNO;
– to encourage the media to provide free-of-charge advertising space for programmes against violence and report on various activities;
– to prepare campaigns and other activities in cooperation with various media that will achieve specific objectives.

**Operators:** Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Culture, Government Office for Equal Opportunities
1.2.3 Strategy for the promotion of the constructive role of media in decreasing family violence

The European Parliament adopted in January 2008 a resolution (INI/2007/2093), which on the basis of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child proposes to member states to eliminate from their media programmes all harmful contents for children and youth that encourage violence, including the marketing of violent video games and accessibility to pornographic web pages (consequently sexual abuse of children). According to the resolution of the European Parliament, the media need to be encouraged to carry out objective reporting on the problems of family violence and mandatory protection against media exposure of children and juveniles notwithstanding the parents’ position (INI/2007/2093, Article 9 of the Family Violence Act); mass media have at the same time a mission to educate the public about causes and consequences of specific manifestations of violence. Especially visual media need to be encouraged to exercise the rights of children to healthy and balanced development and, in the production that is intended for children not to show violence, but to depict positive social values. In conducting the public discussion on the amendments of the Media Act (Media Act, OG RS, no. 110/06-UPB1, 36/08), special attention will be devoted to the improvements of the act, which shall afterwards more clearly define the reporting rules for children in media and more strictly sanction sensationalistic reporting (for instance, disclosure of the privacy of children and family tragedies in media contributions).

Key tasks

- to inform the public about the work of shelters and crisis centres, parents’ responsibility and services, to which one can turn to;
- to present the role of professional services, which deal with family violence, in a media objective and professional manner;
- to expand the information about the family violence issues in the media also in forms, which are at the disposal of both adults and children with special needs and persons, who speak a minority language;
- to achieve awareness with the media who have a very important role in creating the public opinion on the (in)tolerance of violence; to spread the awareness among people that each human being has the right to a life without violence and personal inviolability and dignity, and at the same time to encourage the reporting of acts of violence;
- awareness of the public on the scope, severity and specific manifestations and other characteristics of family violence, especially in order to obtain public support in combating family violence;
- to support programmes and projects for the promotion and education of media to act in a responsible way when depicting media contents in connection with violence;
- to create communication campaigns for systematic awareness of the public regarding issues of violence by inter-ministerial cooperation and the active role of the media as partners.

Operators: Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs
1.2.4 Education strategy for responsible and quality partnerships as well as schools and parents

It is important to encourage married and unmarried couples to have more responsible and better quality partnerships. They need to be provided with quality and professionally prepared programmes, in order to obtain clearer awareness about their own beliefs, stereotypes and behaviour patterns and to get to know their alternative patterns, which shall be based on mutual respect and the formation of a more responsible and quality partnership.

At the same time, parents need to be encouraged to have more responsible and quality parenthoods. Parents are the ones who can do the most for the breaking of the chain of stereotypes and destructive behaviour patterns. They need to be provided with quality and professionally prepared programmes, which shall present constructive behaviour as well as serve as a basis for the intolerance of physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them.

All these programmes will also include learning of non-violent and peaceful settlement of disputes.

Key tasks

- to encourage and expand educational programmes for more responsible and better quality partnerships (preparation for marriage, school for partnerships);
- to encourage and finance educational programmes for responsible and quality parenthoods (school for parents);
- within the context of the promotion programmes for media and cultural roles, all those contents shall be supported that concern systematic awareness of youth and their parents in connection with the issue of media representation of family violence.

Operators: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Culture

1.2.5 Reduction strategy of risky and harmful alcohol and illegal drug abuse

The relationship between the abuse of alcohol and violence has been known for a long time,4 but systematic studies that contribute to the understanding of reasons and background processes have been conducted only in the last 25 years.5

Awareness and understanding of the nature of the relationship between these two phenomena is important for the development of efficient prevention strategies for the abuse of alcohol and illegal drugs in connection with violence and relevant social problems.6

Key tasks

- awareness of the public on the harmful abuse of alcohol and support to programmes for the reduction of risky and harmful use of alcohol;
- awareness of the public on the harmful abuse of illegal drugs and support to programmes for the reduction of such use.

**Operators:** Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs

### 2 ELIMINATION OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN AND HUMILIATING TREATMENT OF THEM

#### 2.1 Description of the problem

Children have the same rights as adults to respect for human dignity and physical inviolability. All 47 member states of the Council of Europe, including Slovenia, are in accordance with international and regional documents on human rights directly obliged to adjust their acts and implement educational and other measures for the prohibition and elimination of all forms of punishment of children, including physical punishment and humiliating treatment within a family.

Physical punishment and humiliating treatment are defined as every act, intended for the punishment of a child, which would be considered as an illegal assault, if directed towards an adult. According to the Family Violence Act, violence against a child presents this act. The legal basis for the prohibition of physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which stipulates the obligation to protect a child with all the corresponding legislative, administrative, social and educational measures against all forms of physical or psychological violence in the period under the custody of parents or other persons taking care of a child (Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). The Committee on the Rights of the Child in the context of the United Nations Organization recommended to Slovenia that it strengthen its efforts to solve the problem of abuse of children and bad treatment of them within the family. Physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them is contrary to the equal and inalienable rights of children to the respect for their human dignity and physical inviolability. Their special nature, dependence and development, their unique human capabilities and vulnerability demand a higher level of legal protection against all forms of violence. Efforts for the elimination of the widely-spread tolerance for physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them within the family is at the same time an important strategy for the reduction and prevention of all forms of family violence.

#### 2.2 Objectives:

1. Enact and, in practice, eliminate all forms of physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them.
2. Ensure comprehensive awareness of children and everyone who lives and works with them, as well as the general public about the prohibition of all forms of physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them.

2.3 Strategies

2.3.1. Enaction strategy of the explicit prohibition of physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them

The elimination of all forms of physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them demands a combination of a consistent and uniform legal form as well as protective and preventive policies. Positive educational measures also play a very important role, since they shall raise the life quality of all persons to a level, where no one will allow humiliating punishment of children. Therefore, legal prohibition is a very important step towards the legal protection of children’s rights, since it shows the attitude of the state towards the problem of physical punishment of children. The implementation of this strategy is incorporated in the proposal of the Family Code, which explicitly stipulates that children shouldn’t be exposed to any form of physical punishment or humiliating treatment.

Key tasks

- to incorporate in the legislation of the domestic area the explicit prohibition of physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them;
- to ensure appropriate education on the family dynamics and family violence for judges in domestic and criminal court departments and for judges, to whom these cases are allocated in courts without any specialised domestic departments, including prosecutors;
- to provide appropriate education of other groups, the work of which is related to the target group of children and juveniles;
- to ensure the education of parents in order to deal with this issue.

Operators: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

2.3.2. Strategy for the provision of comprehensive awareness of children and adults on the rights of children, prohibition of physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them

The problem of physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them needs to be transferred from the private sphere into the public one. Space for discussion on problems needs to be created and positive examples and solutions need to be found. Without wider awareness in the public domain it will be hard to achieve permanent behaviour changes in the upbringing of children without violence. Physical punishment of children and humiliating treatment of them so far haven’t received a lot of media attention in comparison to themes such as sexual violence and abuse of child labour. A study by the United Nations on violence against children emphasizes that the media play a key role in shaping the opinions and general social norms that influence the behaviour of people.
Key tasks

- to encourage the formation and implementation of various education and training programmes and organisations, and at the same time obtain the proper support for all parents, especially those who are having problems in the education of children.

Operators: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Sport

3. REPORTING AND TREATMENT OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

3.1 Description of the problem

The practice of identifying acts of violence in families, preparation of criminal charges and judicial procedures against the perpetrators of criminal offences shows that the procedures are generally long-lasting and therefore substantially less efficient than how they could’ve been. Less efficiency is visible in the procedures of state authorities and also in the legal protection of victims and the provision of general security. The number of reported criminal offences of family violence is increasing every year. The right to personal dignity and safety referred to in Article 34 and the right to judicial protection referred to in Article 23 of the constitution dictate the institutions to permanently strive to carry out their work and tasks in such a way that these rights are provided to anyone in the shortest possible time.

Victims of family violence who decide to change their way of living, which means the termination of a violent relationship, must begin or propose various legal procedures (civil, criminal law, administrative). The accessibility of legal assistance to the victims of family violence is therefore extremely important. Various forms of family violence (physical, psychological, sexual) are generally highly connected with economic violence: the violator decreases his own contribution for the livelihood of the family and even limits the victims to using her/his own income. Due to such circumstances (beside mental helplessness), victims cannot provide legal assistance on their own; a consequence is also that due to their lack of legal knowledge they don’t use the offered state assistance for the provision of safety and long-term settlement of family conditions (introduction of appropriate legal procedures). This knowledge needs to be considered as a circumstance when determining conditions for the provision of free-of-charge legal assistance within the framework of “justified family conditions of the applicant”. Moreover, family violence is such a circumstance that justifies the priority treatment of the application for the provision of free-of-charge legal assistance (Article 25 of the Family Violence Act).

Awareness about the urgency of planned and harmonised inter-institutional cooperation as an important form and work method for the elimination and primary prevention of family violence, as well as for education regarding the re-integration of perpetrators and convicted persons into the domestic and wider social and working environment is not represented enough, or doesn’t even exist in individual groups of state authorities and institutions.
Important problems in this area are:
- decisions of competent authorities in unreasonable deadlines (long-term sustainability of judicial procedures);
- inconsistent implementation of procedures, stipulated by special acts;
- bad work organisation and insufficient utilization of available sources;
- informatization of judicial procedures;
- bad information flow between authorities and institutions;
- insufficient qualifications of investigators, prosecutors and judges in connection with family violence;
- victims of criminal offences are on their own; therefore, they lose their trust in the functioning of a legal state and the efficiency of those who would have to provide the necessary assistance;
- inter-institutional cooperation between authorities and institutions is not organised and protocolised in a uniform way, especially in preventing and reducing family violence and for the social rehabilitation of the perpetrators of acts of violence;
- not enough planned activities and measures that would be inter-institutionally arranged and harmonised;
- there is no planned, systematic, concrete and inter-institutionally harmonised treatment for the perpetrators of violence after the served sentence or discharge from serving a sentence.

3.2 Objectives

1. Reduce the time of reporting and identifying the perpetrators of acts of violence and provide efficient inter-institutional cooperation.
2. Reduce the duration of judicial procedures.
3. Additional education of professional workers, who deal with family violence.

3.3 Strategies

3.3.1 Strategy of efficient inter-institutional cooperation

It is necessary to establish systematic, planned and permanent inter-institutional cooperation and cooperation of institutions with non-governmental organisations. An important addition to more efficient cooperation will also be the procedures of cooperation of various authorities, which shall be stipulated by an implementing regulation.

Key tasks

- creation of uniform guidelines for the operations of regional coordinators for the prevention of violence;
- formation and adoption of common and harmonised institutional tasks and measures for the reduction and prevention of family violence and work with the perpetrators of violence
(the plan must clearly define the role, expected activities of individual institutions and methods of mutual cooperation also regarding the health care policy, social and family policy, school and education policy, media policy, residential policy, policy of protection of children and juveniles as well as ethnic minorities);
- implementation of treatment protocols by institutions (health care, social sector, schools, police) and non-governmental organisations;
- creation and adoption of a uniform inter-institutional protocol.

**Operators:** Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Sport

### 3.3.2 Strategy of increasing the efficiency of justice

In order to increase the efficiency of justice, the following has to be undertaken: standardisation of judicial procedures and the simplification of the legislation, informing of the courts, additional qualifications of judges and state prosecutors, reorganisation and better administration of courts and adoption of measures that shall increase the efficiency of justice.

**Key tasks**

- implementation of the project "e-justice" and the project for the elimination of court backlogs until 2010, the so-called Lukenda project;
- establishment of specialised departments for the treatment of civil and criminal aspects of family violence in district courts.

**Operator:** Ministry of Justice

### 3.3.3 Strategy of creating a comparable registration methodology

A comparable methodology of collecting data on victims and perpetrators of violence as well as data on the type of violence treatment needs to be established. So far, the data has been obtained directly from the individual and from the official records in the Republic of Slovenia.

**Key tasks**

- to establish a comparable registration methodology of acts of violence and integrity of records;
- to document acts of violence according to the content of relationships and gender, since this sort of data collection would be more transparent and would ease the research of this issue;
- to present to the public once a year the entire statistics of acts of violence;
- to supplement the education and training programmes of all individuals who participate in pre-trial criminal and criminal procedure.

**Operators:** Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Health

### 3.3.4 Strategy of education and training of professional workers
The following needs to be developed and periodically implemented: national educational of professional public and policy makers at the national level for the support of their work, including employees in justice, the police and persons who perform education during conditional release, staff in prisons, employees in the social area, psychiatry, psychology, health care, schools, persons who deal with refugees and immigrants, civil servants and members of parliament. Education must incorporate the definition of terms, forms of violence and their scope, influence to those who are especially exposed to family violence, consequences, costs of violence, needs of all involved parties as well as professional reactions of the target population of education. The initial and further training of professional workers, employees of care centres and other institutions, health care personnel, police and employees in education and schooling must, beside the indicated entities, also include the learning of multidisciplinary and inter-institutional work.

**Key tasks**

- development and implementation of educational modules on the family violence issues for the expert public and policy makers at the national level;
- awareness and professional education of counsellors who deal with families regarding the urgency of the identification and early estimation of family violence;
- the ministries must provide the development, professional training and further education of experts who have contact with persons who experienced family violence. The training programmes must include the areas of child abuse and protection, learning of working protocols in these areas, methods and multidisciplinary forms of reacting, and also the development of the work qualifications with children who might have been abused. The programmes must be formed in a multidisciplinary and inter-ministerial manner, since this consequently leads to more efficient operating and cooperation of disciplines;
- professional workers must have the following provided at their place of work: supervision, instructions, consultations and inspector's control as well as additional training, in order to work efficiently and quickly recognize the various forms of family violence;
- organisation of expert meetings, which should be conducted annually in regions with all operators; namely, as additional education, mutual informing and strengthening of mutual cooperation;
- to provide safety of professional workers when dealing with individual cases of family violence;
- introduction of the supervision for all professional workers, involved in the treatment of violence.


**4. ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS WHO EXPERIENCED FAMILY VIOLENCE**

**4.1 Description of the problem**

In comparison with other "public" forms of violence, family violence is harder to recognize and register due to its placement in the private sphere of individuals. Therefore, professional services frequently face various forms of family violence only at the stage where they have been going on for a longer time and the consequences are already cruel and fatal.
Due to the particularity of the violence issue, victims more frequently seek the assistance of non-governmental organisations; therefore, it is absolutely necessary to encourage the spreading of the network of existing, and establishment of new, non-governmental organisations also outside Central Slovenia and bigger centres. Especially, it is important to guarantee that various forms of assistance (legal, psycho-social, psychotherapeutic assistance, crisis accommodations, crisis mediation, safe houses) will be equally distributed and accessible.

Systematic multi-institutional harmonisation needs to be established not only at the level of institutions, but also at the level of non-governmental organisations. However, this demands additional personnel who will be able to establish a system, including its maintenance and harmonisation. Due to the particularities of the issue, there is an increasing need for higher professional qualifications, which is also connected with higher costs. Furthermore, the employment of additional experts in the non-governmental sector is absolutely necessary (lawyers, psychotherapists, experts on drug dependence, pedagogues, childcare workers, healthcare staff). In order to slowly transfer part of the financial burden to the donors and sponsors, the employment of individuals, who will manage the organisations and will be qualified for the obtainment of funds, has to be encouraged.

An important reason that victims stay for several years in a living community with the perpetrator of violence is a housing issue. The Human Rights Ombudsman has also faced/addressed the housing issue of victims of family violence, which can be seen in her annual reports.

In 2004, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning adopted for the implementation of public tenders the Rules on renting non-profit apartments (following: rules), which stipulates the options of running for tenders in a place of temporary accommodation to women, who are temporarily accommodated in maternity homes, safe houses, shelters and centres for the assistance to victims of criminal offences.

There is also an option of extraordinary renting of a non-profit apartment directly on the basis of a decision by a mayor or director of the public housing fund - following the opinion of a social work centre - for a set time limit to a family, which needs temporary relocation due to the protection of the interests of a child. According to the opinion of the legal discipline, this reason unequivocally includes also a woman with children who are exposed to family violence; violence of a partner against his partner also presents violence against children - the interest and benefits of children are considered by the resettlement of children and women from a violent father or partner.

Due to the lack of capacities in safe houses and crisis centres (the problem is not the entire capacity of the network, but the nearness due to as normal as possible living of a mother and children - work, kindergarten, school, etc), women who experienced violence are accepted also by maternity homes, although they were not established with this purpose - its purpose was to facilitate pregnant women, women giving birth and mothers with small children, who are socially and economically endangered. Beds in maternity homes also aren't mentioned in the recommendation of the Committee on Women`s Rights and Gender Equality at the European Parliament, in accordance with which the state should provide at least one bed in safe houses per 10000 women.

Currently there aren't any safe houses or crisis centres in Slovenia, which are adjusted for physically impaired women. This means that women in wheelchairs and elderly women as well as physically impaired women don't have any options of retreat in a safe house or crisis centre.
Slovenia also doesn’t have evenly distributed forms of assistance. At the level of the state, the social work centres and police are evenly distributed, while non-governmental organisations are concentrated in central Slovenia and larger centres, which doesn’t provide any choice to the victims. Data from the analysis of the situation (Violence against women in families: analysis of the situation; Robnik, Skornšek - Pleš, Veselič and Expert Council for Violence, 2001) indicate that in the considered years substantially more women turned to the assistance of non-governmental organisations than of the official institutions.

Victims needs to be acquainted with the possibility of obtaining a compensation according to the Act on Compensation to Crime Victims,7 which governs the right to compensation to the victims of the intentionally committed violent criminal offences as well as their relatives, if the result of this act was death of the victim.

4.2 Objectives

1. Solve the issue of temporary accommodation for victims.
2. Solve the issue of temporary accommodation for the perpetrators of violence, who were imposed a restraining order to a specific place or person.
3. Provide sufficient funds by public tenders, so that non-governmental organisations shall have an opportunity to implement the already continuing assistance programmes and develop new forms.
4. Increase the number of various measures and activities for efficient assistance to victims and perpetrators of violence.
5. Adjustment or establishment of new safe houses and crisis centres for elderly persons, physically impaired, users with problems of mental health or those with special needs.

4.3 Strategies

4.3.1 Strategy of settling the housing issue of family violence

Housing units are not a substitution for “social apartments” according to the Housing Act, but a solution of the housing problem in all cases, when temporary accommodation is mandatory due to the social crisis of an applicant. Family violence should be considered as a circumstance that demands a quick and temporary solution of the housing issue. In Slovenia, there is a large need for additional transition housing units, where users could move to after the expiry of accommodation in safe houses, especially since, due to the existing circumstances, they don’t have an arranged housing situation and are found to be in a bad socio-economic situation – either due to bad employment possibilities or long-term judicial procedures. The possibility of accommodation in housing units needs to be provided also for cases where women with sons, aged 15 or over (boys only up to 14 years may reside in safe houses), and those with special needs, which prevent them living together with others, must withdraw from violence.

Key tasks

7 OG RS, no. 110/05.
- arrange the possibility of transitional housing units for a wider circle of applicants.

**Operators:** Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs

### 4.3.2 Assistance strategy for the victims of family violence

Various assistance programmes for the victims of family violence criminal offences need to be created.

**Key tasks**

- increase the financial resources from the public budget for the public tender of assistance to the victims of violence as long-term financing;
- verify the efficiency of capacities in safe houses and maternity homes;
- provide the programmes of treatment and assistance to children, juveniles and victims of family violence;
- provide the programmes of treatment and assistance to elderly persons, disabled persons and persons who are not capable of taking care of themselves due to special circumstances;
- provide the capacities for intervention accommodation of the victims of violence.

**Operator:** Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs

### 4.3.3 Assistance strategy for families and their protection

It is necessary to provide efficient assistance to families, in which violence has occurred or has been occurring, protect the victims of violence and endeavour for a change in the behaviour of the perpetrators of violence. However, any interpellations that would in any way divide the guilt for the caused violence between the perpetrators and victims of violence must be avoided. The perpetrator of violence must take responsibility for his actions, which also have to be sanctioned.

**Key tasks**

- preparation of comprehensive information on the process of procedures before state authorities, and about the rights of victims and other participants (family members, witnesses, etc) in procedures;
- analysis of causes and consequences of violence in an individual family, analysis of assistance mechanisms to the victims of violence (competent institutions, non-governmental organisations) and their efficiency.

**Operators:** Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health
4.3.4 Strategy of working with perpetrators of family violence

Various programmes for work with the perpetrators of family violence must be created and their inclusion in the existing programmes encouraged.

**Key tasks**

– establish a network of assistance programmes for the perpetrators of violence;
– if family violence occurs in connection with excessive consumption of alcohol, the perpetrator should be directed to treatment of alcohol dependence and to programmes in the area of violence;
– if family violence occurs in connection with excessive consumption of illegal drugs, the perpetrator should be directed to treatment of drug addiction and to programmes in the area of violence;
– increase of financial resources from the public budget for the public tender of programmes for working with the perpetrators of violence;
– establish assistance programmes for violent children and juveniles in schools, in order to abandon violence and remain in the school system to complete their education.

**Operators:** Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Sport

4.3.5 Adaptive strategy for providing assistance to physically impaired persons

Currently in Slovenia there aren’t any safe houses or crisis centres that have been adjusted for physically impaired women. In practice this means that women in wheelchairs and elderly physically impaired women cannot retreat to these institutions.

**Key tasks**

- adjustment of safe houses and maternity homes or establishment of new ones for physically impaired persons and persons with special needs;
- systematic arrangement of assistance to foreign citizens;
- establishment of intervention beds in retirement homes and special social and juvenile institutions.

**Operator:** Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs

5. RESEARCH

5.1 Description of the problem
In Slovenia, we don't have a comprehensive periodical research on family violence, which has also been noticed by international organisations (recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of the United Nations Organisation). Research is extremely important for the comprehensive approach of this issue. Quantity and quality data (longitudinal research) need to be obtained in a systematic manner, in order to contribute to the shaping of clear and specific objectives as well as efficient assistance and successful prevention of family violence. Furthermore, research can also indicate the level of success of organisations and authorities in preventing family violence. Usefulness and rationality of research is naturally dependent on the integrity of experts from various areas.

5.2 Objectives

1. Development of research programmes in the field of family violence with the emphasis on evaluation of various areas and approaches.
2. Establish national and comparable indicators.
3. Comparison of national statistical data, methods and programmes, gathered by the involved organisations in the field of family violence.

5.3 Strategies

5.3.1 National research strategy on family violence and its periodical implementation

It is necessary to carry out national research on family violence; namely, every five years. Its purpose is to show the success rate of the attainment of objectives, stipulated in the national programme, and the movement of identifying and reducing family violence.

Key task

- carry out research and provide resources for its periodical implementation every five years.


5.3.2 Strategy of establishing a national database and comparable indicators

It is necessary to establish national and international databases (useful addresses, lists of non-governmental organisations and institutions, examples of good practice, legislation, statistics) and implement new information technologies (world wide web) in order to integrate important institutions. It is necessary to carry out an analysis of the prevention and treatment system and manifestations of violence in the private sphere and partnerships. For further
systematic and continued monitoring of violence in the private sphere and partnerships, a plan of data collection system on violence in the private sphere and partnerships with regard to indicators, adopted by the European Union, shall be prepared in cooperation with all competent institutions.

**Key tasks**

- establish a database;
- provide funds in the national budget from all competent authorities;
- analysis of the prevention and treatment system and manifestations of violence in the private sphere and partnerships.

**Operators:** Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Health, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, Government Office for Equal Opportunities

5.3.3 Strategy of preventing violence in connection with alcohol and use of illegal drugs

**Alcohol, illegal drugs and violence**

In order to limit the consumption of alcohol, the Act Restricting the Use of Alcohol was adopted (ZOPA, OG RS, no. 15/03). ZOPA stipulates the measures and limitation methods as well as measures for the prevention of harmful consequences of the use of alcohol, including violence. These measures also include the monitoring of the use of alcohol and the scope of its harmful consequences for health, informing, education and awareness of the public and individual groups of population about these consequences, harmonisation of activities for early identification of persons with alcohol problems, in order to integrate them into preventive programmes; other measures include professional counselling and support to institutions, societies, non-governmental organisations, local communities and individuals in the implementation of preventive programmes and solving of problems in connection with the use of alcohol. The Ministry of Health in cooperation with other ministries, institutions, experts and non-governmental organisation has been preparing action programmes of limiting the use of alcohol and reducing its harmful consequences, including the aforementioned measures.

The area of drugs in Slovenia is governed by two fundamental acts; namely, the Act Regulating the Prevention of the Use of Illicit Drugs and the Treatment of Drug Users (ZPUPD, OG RS, no. 98/99 in 2/04) and Production of and Trade in Illicit Drugs Act (ZPPPD, OG RS, no. 108/99, 44/00, 2/04, 37/05 – decision of the Constitutional Court and 16/08 – decision of the Constitutional Court). ZPUPD stipulates measures and activities that contribute to the decrease of the demand for drugs. This includes various information campaigns and preventive programmes, health care and social activities, programmes of reducing damage and activities in connection with the monitoring and analysis of the drug use issues. The approach to this area must be comprehensive by considering the use and misuse of drugs as a consequence of simultaneous multi-layer events at the individual and wider social level, which sometimes includes various players and different levels of operation.
and harmonisation. Various sectors of social assistance, health care, education, justice, interior and finances and consequently various parts of the civil society and general (lay) public are dealing with the drugs issue. In 2004, the National Drug Programme for the Period 2004 – 2009 (ReNPPD, OG RS, no. 28/04) was adopted, which substantially covers everything – from primary prevention and treatment to various repressive police and customs measures.

**Key tasks**

- situation analysis in the areas of alcohol and illegal drugs in connection with family violence (common project of competent authorities in the form of target-research programmes);
- on the basis of scientifically verified efficient measures, preparation of a proposal for the reduction of family violence in connection with alcohol and/or illegal drugs;
- establish assistance programmes for groups of children and juveniles, whose parents are users of alcohol and/or illegal drugs.

**Operators:** Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Sport

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME

6.1 Action plans

The National Programme stipulates the objective and measures for following the strategic policy in connection with the reduction and prevention of violence, preventive activities and awareness in this area. To guarantee the realisation of the objectives and measures, planned for the entire five-year period, ZPND stipulates that an action plan shall be prepared every two years, which shall also define activities for the following two years. This is the implementing act of the national programme, which stipulates the priority tasks and activities for the realisation of objectives and measures in individual areas.

Respective action plans shall be prepared on the basis of reports on the implemented activities in the previous two-year period and additional proposals of policies and tasks of individual ministries and non-governmental organisations. The proposal of the text shall be created by a working group, formed for this purpose by the ministry, competent for labour, family and social affairs. Following this, the ministry shall submit the proposal of the new action plan to the government for adoption.

Action plans shall specify also the necessary funds for the implementation of activities and the added value of measures for the attainment of the national programme objectives. At the same time, the action plan shall specify the time limit in the implementation method of individual activities, including its operators.
6.2 Data and indicators

Due to the observation of progress and shaping of new and appropriate measures for the reduction and prevention of violence and also for the provision of prevention, it is necessary to systematically monitor various forms of family violence. Institutions, competent for the monitoring of statistical data (so-called data that are constantly collected in line ministries, police and other organisations), form their databases; therefore, they are frequently not comparable with each other. Harmonised and comparable international data is also one of the national programme objectives. Uniform monitoring indicators are important also for the placement of Slovenia in the analysis of the member states of the European Union in the area of violence.

Important instruments for the monitoring of the situation, beside the indicators, are also the analyses and research. In Slovenia, we don’t have comprehensive research on the issue of family violence, which has also been noticed by international organisations (recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of the United Nations Organisation). Research is extremely important for the comprehensive approach to this issue. Furthermore, research can also indicate the level of success of organisations and authorities in preventing family violence. The purpose of the national programme is to introduce periodical national research that shall analyse this area every five years.

The national programme also stipulates quantity and quality indicators, which shall be used for the monitoring of the various forms of family violence in Slovenia. Indicators are derived from the existing databases in Slovenia and adopted indicators of the European Union, to which these databases adjust.

For the report on the implementation of the national programme, social work centres receive free-of-charge data from the official databases, which are maintained by authorised authorities and organisations.

6.3 Monitoring, reporting and information

Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is competent for the monitoring of the national programme implementation; namely, on the basis of carried-out activities within the framework of action plans, and for the periodic reporting to the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia every two years.

The implementation of the national programme shall be accompanied by comprehensive information of the public at the web pages of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

6.4 Resources

Proposed measures for the attainment of the national programme objectives are planned mostly as an integral part of the shaping and implementation of policies in respective social
areas, which are in the jurisdiction of individual ministries and government offices as well as non-governmental organisations. Hereby, the redirection of attention to immediate actions and provision of assistance by competent authorities and organisations, and more efficient and accelerated incorporation of prevention of family violence of already running processes is demanded. Therefore, ministries and government services will implement their measures primarily within the framework of regular legislative jurisdictions of programmes and tasks. However, in some areas special activities need to be stipulated (common campaign of ministries and government services for the prevention of family violence), for which ministries and government services shall devote special resources from their budgets.

The stipulated resources don't include the costs of wages and costs of the employees of ministries and government services, since the measures of the national programme are planned as an integral part of the regular implementation of policies and programmes of competent ministries and government services.

### 6.4.1 Special measures

It is important that the awareness of human rights and activities for the prevention of family violence are included in all policies and programmes of the regular work of ministries and government offices. However, in some areas, enhanced activities are absolutely necessary as well as the adoption and implementation of measures, for which special funds need to be stipulated.

For the entire period of the validity of the national programme, the estimation of indicative resources for the implementation of special measures can be defined on the basis of the already stipulated resources, by which programmes and measures in individual areas have been implemented.

The target-research programmes shall encourage the research of the manifestations of violence and analyses of good practice examples in this area. Approximately 254,000 EUR are intended for the latter in the entire implementation period of the national programme.

445,000 EUR are intended for further training of experts for the treatment and prevention of family violence, 291,000 EUR for the awareness and information of wider public on this issues, and 400,000 EUR for the common campaign of ministries against family violence.

Co-financing of projects and activities of non-governmental organisations in the area of family violence, work with victims and perpetrators of violence as well counselling belong to the tasks of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs inside the public tender “Supplementary Programmes of Social Assistance”; the ministry will in the entire period devote indicatively 8 million EUR for this purpose.

A specific plan of the activities for the attainment of the national programme objectives and a specific definition of resources (budget heading; source: national budget, resources of the European Union) for the implementation of these activities shall be specified in action plans, adopted for every two-year period of the implementation of this programme.
### Table 8: Resources for special measures by areas for the period 2009–2014, in thousand EUR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>National budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education of professional workers</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventive campaigns</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common campaign of ministries against violence</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-financing of non-governmental organisations</td>
<td>8000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9390</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 9: Resources for special measures by areas for the period 2009–2014, by individual ministries or government offices, in thousand EUR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>Education of professional workers</th>
<th>Awareness of individual target groups (prevention)</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Common national campaign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>400&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
<td>30&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Education and Sport</td>
<td>180&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>200&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>210&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of the Interior</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
<td>200&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>20-30&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Office for Equal Opportunities</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>16&lt;sup&gt;9&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>14&lt;sup&gt;10&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> Ministries shall reserve the resources for the common national campaign for the budget year 2010 in proportionally equal shares; Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs – PP 5550.<br><sup>2</sup> 5250 – Resources of the Judicial Training Centre.<br><sup>3</sup> 9264 – Judicial Training-07-13-European Union.<br><sup>4</sup> 9280 – Judicial Training-07-13-European Union – Slovenian participation.<br><sup>5</sup> Financed from the resources of the ESS (85 % – PP 9240) and national resources (15 % – PP 9252). These are resources, intended for the projects of identifying and preventing violence in educational institutions.<br><sup>6</sup> 100 from the budget heading; Ministry of Education and Sport (PP 7169), 110 financed from the resources of the ESS (85 % – PP 9240) and national resources (15 % – PP 9252). These are studies about violence in schools.<br><sup>7</sup> Financed from the budget heading 5572.<br><sup>8</sup> Financed from the budget heading 5572.<br><sup>9</sup> These are resources, intended for the programme of professional education Identification and prevention of violence, which includes the following contents: identification and prevention of violent behaviour in schools; victims of peer violence – identification and assistance possibilities; non-violent communication for better mutual relationships; methods of non-violent settlement of disputes; new methods of working with children and juveniles with less acceptable forms of behaviour; violence and sexual abuse in families – identification and assistance possibilities; trafficking in persons and sexual abuse due to prostitution and pornography; awareness and informing; sexual violence – awareness, informing and prevention. The programme is financed from the resources of the ESS (85 % – PP 9243) and national resources (15 % – PP 9255).<br><sup>10</sup> Ministry of Health PP 7083 (the total amount considers the upper limit of the stipulated resources).<br><sup>11</sup> Ministry of Health PP 7083<br><sup>10</sup> Government Office for Equal Opportunities PP 4390<br><sup>11</sup> Government Office for Equal Opportunities PP 1310
INDICATORS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

All areas, incorporated in the national programme, determine also the indicators, which shall be used for the monitoring of the implementation of individual measures for the attainment of specified objectives of prevention of family violence in the implementation period of the national programme, from 2009 to 2014.

Beside the indicators for the monitoring of the implementation of measures for the prevention of family violence, as stipulated by the national programme, it is also necessary to specify and systematically monitor the relationship towards the violence issues in public and private life. Indicators in individual areas are monitored on the basis of national databases or adopted indicators of the European Union, to which the national system of data collection is adjusted.

The following are the defined indicators for the monitoring of the status of women and men for all areas of social life, for which the national programme stipulates the objectives and measures for the provision of equal opportunities of women and men.

1. **Information on the victims of violence**
   a) Sex
   b) Age
   c) Relationship with the perpetrator
   d) Citizenship
   e) Other important data (for instance, education)

2. **Information on the perpetrator of violence**
   a) Sex
   b) Age
   c) Relationship with the victim
   d) Citizenship
   e) Other important data (for instance, education)

3. **Support to the victim and perpetrator of an act of violence**
   a) Number of users for assistance to the perpetrator
   b) Types of assistance (counselling, psychological or psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation programmes in prisons, number of referral to the treatment of alcohol abuse)

4. **Training of professional workers**
   a) Number of professional workers, who were educated in the area of family violence
   b) Scope of education by hours per professional worker

5. **Police indicators**
   a) Number of reports of family violence criminal offences
b) Number of criminal complaints against family violence, submitted to district state prosecutors

c) Number of imposed restraining orders in accordance with Article 39a of the Police Act

d) Number of deprivations of freedom and production to an investigating judge in accordance with Article 157 of the Criminal Procedure Act

6. **School indicators**
   a) Number of projects, carried out by schools for the prevention of family violence
   b) Number of involved pupils in the violence prevention projects

7. **Justice indicators**
   a) Number of received criminal complaints
   b) Number of lodged criminal charges
   c) Number of judgements of conviction
   d) Number of judgements of acquittal
   e) Number of judgements of refusal
   f) Number of detention orders
   g) Number of restraining orders to a specific place or person according to the Criminal Procedure Act
   h) Number of measures, ordered on the basis of the Family Violence Act

**EXPLANATION**

1. **General**
Family violence occurs despite the socio-economic position, gender, age, ethnic affiliation or other personal circumstances of family members. Such behaviour patterns are a consequence of uneven distribution of power between the sexes as well as between parents and children. Family violence is frequent in relationships that allow it or even accept it as socially acceptable behaviour. Family violence incorporates various forms: physical assault, forcing into sexual intercourse, sexual abuse, rape, threats, intimidation, economic violence, abandonment of obligatory care or negligence and similar. However, this violence is still frequently considered as an exclusively private issue.


The Resolution 2009-2014 National Programme on Prevention of Family Violence is a strategic document that stipulates the objectives and the key policy operators for the prevention and reduction of family violence in the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2009 to 2014. The resolution incorporates:

- estimation of the situation and definition of key problems in the area of family violence, which is incorporated in the first part of the document in chapter four;
- fundamental objectives, policies and tasks in the area of the prevention of family violence in the period, as stipulated by the document in the first part in chapter five and first chapter of the second part;
- operators of action plans for the implementation of policies and tasks from the national programme in individual areas are stipulated in each strategy;
- preventive activities are covered in the document within the context of different strategies;
- data, which shall be collected, processed, connected, stored, analysed and presented within the framework of the activities of national statistics, are defined in the chapter on research;
- policies for the education and training are included in the education and training strategy of professional workers in the third chapter of part two;
- provision of financial and other resources also for the operations of non-governmental organisation are included in the chapter, referring to the national programme implementations (chapter six in the second part).

In other words, the fundamental objectives of this document are to connect the measures of various sectoral ministries and provide efficient activities for the reduction of family violence; namely, at the level of its identification and prevention. Specific tasks and activities for the attainment of objectives and implementation of individual measures shall be specified in action plans, which shall be created every two years and will specify the deadlines and implementation methods. Each action plan shall be prepared on the basis of reports on the implemented activities in the previous two-year period and additional proposals of policies and tasks of individual ministries and non-governmental organisations.
Furthermore, it has to be emphasized that the resolution shall devote special attention to violence against groups who are particularly exposed: children, women, elderly persons, disabled persons and persons who are not able to take care of themselves due to special circumstances. The document considers the special needs of victims and their personal circumstances. The basic principles and starting points against family violence are:

- violence against another person is a violation of fundamental human rights and must be considered and properly sanctioned, since there is no acceptable or permissible threshold of violence;
- family violence is a social problem, based on unequal distribution of social power between the genders, or between the weaker and the stronger;
- when considering family violence, caused mostly by married, unmarried or former partners and parents or foster parents, the state shall consider that due to the special relationships of family members (love, trust, dependence...) and abuse of these circumstances by the perpetrator this sort of violence must be considered with the same strictness as violence, caused by unknown persons;
- the state shall adopt measures for the prevention of violence and ensure systematic protection for victims.

The state must with its institutions (primarily social work centres and other social assistance institutions, government offices, police, courts and prosecution office, kindergartens, schools, educational institutions, institutions for serving a prison sentence, correction homes and health care institutions) and employees operate in a preventive and curative manner in order to do everything to prevent violence. In case of violations the state must guarantee that violations are considered according to prescribed procedures. In the future, the state shall encourage the development of programmes of non-governmental organisations for the prevention of family violence by co-financing.

In order to achieve the reduction of violence, the consistent and quick response of each individual as well as institutions and organs, when becoming familiar with a case of family violence, is extremely important. Large efforts need to be directed also towards the period prior to the appearance of violence; namely, towards preventive actions and awareness.

2. Comparative legal practice

There aren't many acts that directly govern family violence in member states of the European Union. However, there are recommendations and guidelines, which were adopted by the Council of Europe, as well as resolutions, adopted and published by the European Parliament, which indicate that the criminalisation of family violence is generally accepted and necessary, if individual member states should fulfil their obligations to the European Union. The Council of Europe and the Organisation of United Nations propose to states to change the existing national legislations, since the latter determine the entire framework of the consideration of family violence and influence the reactions to violence. It was also recommended that police, health care, schools and social work centres are encouraged to form a harmonised action plan that will define the activities for the prevention of family...
violence and support for victims of violence. For instance, in Austria a special authority was formed – an intervention centre for the prevention of family violence.

Modelled after Norway, which in 2000 established the action plan for the prevention of family violence, it would be meaningful to establish an intermediary group in Slovenia, which would take care of the changes in this area. The Norwegian group, which also includes representatives of ministries, harmonises general actions for the prevention of family violence as well as numerous others from the action programme. One of them was also the introduction of a working group, the objective of which was also to bring about some changes in the legislation. More attention was intended to the education of professional workers, who deal with family violence and perpetrators of violence.

3. Strategy of the policy against family violence

In order to achieve zero tolerance of family violence, the public must primarily become well-acquainted with its dimensions, causes and consequences for the individual and society in general. Public events in connection with violence issues need to be prepared, as well as expert and public discussions.

Media are an important factor in shaping the public opinion on a certain social phenomenon in connection with preventive actions against family violence. Namely, the media frequently reports on acts of violence within a family without explaining the background of a story, or even more importantly that a contribution would contain a note of awareness. The identity of victims, which frequently also include juveniles, has so far been completely disclosed in media reporting. Mass media must at the same time inform and educate the public on causes and consequences of the manifestation of violence.

It is necessary to establish systematic, planned and permanent inter-institutional cooperation and cooperation of institutions with non-governmental organisations. An important addition to more efficient cooperation will also be the procedures of cooperation of various authorities, which shall be stipulated by an implementing regulation. Awareness about the urgency of planned and harmonised inter-institutional cooperation as an important form and work method for the elimination and primarily prevention of family violence, as well as for the education regarding the re-integration of perpetrators and convicted persons in the domestic and wider social and working environment is not represented enough, or doesn't even exist in individual groups of state authorities and institutions. Especially, it is important to guarantee that various forms of assistance (legal, psycho-social, psychotherapeutic assistance, crisis accommodations, crisis mediation, safe houses) will be equally distributed and accessible.

The practice of identifying acts of violence in families, preparation of criminal charges and judicial procedures against the perpetrators of criminal offences shows that the procedures are generally long-lasting and therefore substantially less efficient than how they could’ve been. Less efficiency is visible in the procedures of state authorities and also in the legal protection of victims and the provision of general security.
In order to increase the efficiency of justice, the following has to be undertaken: standardisation of judicial procedures and the simplification of the legislation, informing of the courts, additional qualifications of judges and state prosecutors, reorganisation and better administration of courts and adoption of measures that shall increase the efficiency of justice. Victims of family violence who decide to change their way of living, which means the termination of a violent relationship, must begin or propose various legal procedures (civil, criminal law, administrative). The accessibility of legal assistance to the victims of family violence is therefore extremely important. It is necessary to provide efficient assistance to families, in which violence has occurred or has been occurring, protect the victims of violence and endeavour for a change of behaviour of the perpetrators of violence. However, any interpellations that would in any way divide the guilt for the caused violence between the perpetrators and victims of violence must be avoided. The perpetrator of violence must take responsibility for his actions, which also have to be sanctioned. Various programmes for work with the perpetrators of family violence must be created and their inclusion in the existing programmes encouraged.

Research is extremely important for the comprehensive approach of this issue. Quantity and quality data (longitudinal research) need to be obtained in a systematic manner, in order to contribute to the shaping of clear and specific objectives as well as to the efficient assistance and successful prevention of family violence. It is necessary to carry out a national research on family violence; namely, every five years. It is necessary to establish national and international databases (useful addresses, lists of non-governmental organisations and institutions, examples of good practice, legislation, statistics) and implement new information technologies (world wide web) in order to integrate important institutions and ease the access of citizens to relevant information and contents.