The Norway Grants has considerably increased the amounts of funding available to combat gender-based violence, with €20 million set aside from 2009 to 2014. Working through dedicated programmes, the support is now more targeted and strategic. Funded initiatives aim to tackle both the causes and consequences of violence. Public and private bodies, as well as non-governmental organisations, are eligible for funding. Dedicated programmes to tackle gender-based and domestic violence have been established in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovak Republic, with Romania to be agreed. There will also be targeted efforts in Malta, Slovenia and Spain.

Supported activities can include:

› specialist victim protection services, including refuge shelters, phone lines and crisis centres
› police training and law-enforcement cooperation
› advocacy, awareness-raising and campaigns
› research, mapping and data collection
› counselling and treatment programmes for offenders
› specific health-related programmes to reduce the effects of violence.

Violence against women, including domestic violence, is one of the most serious forms of gender-based violations of human rights in Europe that is still shrouded in silence.

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011)
Violence against women is a violation of fundamental human rights. The effects of violence on a victim’s health, both physical and psychological, are severe. Intestimally linked to gender-based inequalities, violence represents a major obstacle to the achievement of full equality between men and women.

An estimated one-fifth to one-quarter of all women in Europe have experienced physical violence at least once during their adult lives, often alongside years of emotional abuse. More than one-tenth have suffered sexual violence involving the use of force.

Sustained by a culture of silence and shame, it is rarely reported. Although pervasive, it is still largely invisible. Violence on a victim’s health, both physical and psychological, are severe. Inextricably linked to gender-based inequalities, violence represents a major obstacle to the achievement of full equality between men and women.

Addressing gender-based violence is vital for improving gender equality and empowering women. Tackling this scourge and supporting its many victims is a dedicated area of support under the Norway Grants.

The significant support channelled through the Norway Grants reflects the importance attached to the issue of gender-based violence for both the donor and beneficiary states. In recent years, the Norwegian government has introduced measures to ensure that the police, educational institutions and support services are better trained, better coordinated and more capable of detecting, preventing and dealing with the complex issues raised by domestic violence.

In addition, the Equality 2014 action plan sets out measures to fight and prevent all forms of violence, coercion and abuse, and to ensure that victims receive the help and protection they need, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnic background or disability.

Combating domestic and gender-based violence is included as a specific area of support under the Norway Grants in almost all beneficiary states for the funding period 2009-2014. Initiatives to tackle violence against women can also be supported under HHS Fund. Worth around €4 million for 2009-2014, these are being established in all beneficiary states to provide funding to civil society organisations. NGOs play a vital role both as service providers and as watchdogs in this area. Funding can also be channelled through other programme areas under the Norway Grants and EEA, such as gender equality, capacity-building, public health and research.

Safeguarding women from violence under the Norway Grants.

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