



RESEARCH REPORT

In-prison programmes in EU Member States for women survivors and for men perpetrators of gender violence

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The main aim of the SPREAD project is to disseminate the knowledge and expertise gained through the ALTRA¹ project to other EU countries and to establish the mechanisms to spread this knowledge, expertise and benefits to more European prisons (male and female inmates, prison staff and penitentiary administrations) and policy makers at national and EU levels promoting the sensitisation on these issues, the implementation of new programmes and the improvement of the existing ones.

Within the ALTRA project a research on existing in-prison programmes dealing with gender violence inside prison was already carried out. The main conclusion of the research was that the number of in-prison programmes being developed in European prisons for both targeted groups was really low. Only 5 countries (Austria, Poland, Spain, Sweden and UK) had in-prison programmes for men perpetrators of gender violence. Any of the EU Member States had an in-prison programme for women survivors of gender violence². The comparative research report and other information on the ALTRA project can be obtained at: www.surt.org/altra.

In order to update the research carried out during the ALTRA project and to know which are the programmes currently being developed in the EU, it was necessary to carry out another European wide research. Moreover, one of the specific objectives of the SPREAD project is to gather updated information and good practices on the existing programmes addressed to women survivors and men perpetrators of gender violence currently in prisons in EU Member States. The aim of gathering and updating the few existing programmes is to make visible what is being done and where. Having all the current programmes available will be helpful to design new programmes, to promote networking of professionals who deal with the issue at a national and European levels and to establish minimum standards of quality and effectiveness for these practices in prison.

¹ 'ALTRA. Tackling gender violence inside prison' is a Daphne project that was ran by SURT (2006-08). You can find more information on the project at www.surt.org/altra

² However, during the ALTRA project, in-prison pilot programmes for women survivors of gender violence were implemented in Catalonia (Spain) and Hungary. As we will see, the one in Catalonia is still running. Unfortunately, the one in Hungary is not running anymore.

The research has been done through secondary research by reading literature on existing programmes and contacting national penitentiary administrations, research institutes and NGOs dealing with women's and/or penitentiary issues of the 27 EU Member States.

The research has aimed at gathering and updating information on existing in-prison programmes providing psychological or other assistance and treatment for both women survivors and men perpetrators of gender violence. However, information on other psychological or psychologically related treatment programmes that addressed gender violence among other issues has also been gathered.

The information was provided mainly by the national penitentiary administration of each country, local non-governmental organisations working in related fields and local experts at research institutes and universities. Several sources of information were contacted in each country, but it has not always been possible to get the information requested. Therefore, there are few countries with missing information in relation to the programmes being implemented in this area (if exist).

The contact with each Member State has been done mainly by email and telephone calls. In some cases traditional mail and fax has been also used. In order to get comprehensive, coherent and homogenous responses a closed questionnaire was designed and distributed. The questionnaire had 12 questions, requesting information regarding the methodology used, the theoretical background of the programme, aspects concerning the participants and the evaluation methods foreseen.

In some of the cases, the organisation or the contact persons did answer the questionnaire. In some other, they sent some information in other formats such as an email or a publication. Therefore, the information obtained for each country is not always homogenous and for some countries there is more exhaustive information than for others.

The information collected is presented in a separate document for each country. In addition, a table with a brief summary concerning the situation of each Member State is included.

From 2006 to 2009: main changes and improvements

As said before, a similar research took place in 2006 in the framework of the Daphne ALTRA project. At that time, one of the main conclusion was that in-prison measures or treatments dealing with gender violence in European prison were not really common. In this sense, concerning women survivors, programmes seldom existed; with regards to men, few countries had programmes for men inmates dealing with gender violence perpetrators and, when existing, they were usually carried out within programmes in general (sexual offenders o violent aggressors) focused on the control of impulses and forgetting the gender dimension that lays at the roots of this kind of violence.

Unfortunately, this conclusion is still valid now. With the research developed within the SPREAD project, it is shown that nowadays there are few programme tackling gender violence inside European prisons. If they do exist, they are mostly addressed to perpetrators rather than women survivors of gender violence. Only in 3 countries (Spanish state -and an independent one in Catalonia-, England and Romania) there are in-prison treatment programmes addressed specifically to women inmates who, before entering into prison suffered gender violence. Regarding programmes for men, only 6 EU countries have some kind of programmes dealing with perpetrators. The countries are: Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Spanish State (and an independent one in Catalonia), Sweden and UK (England).

Other common issues with the research of 2006 are that not all the countries have facilitated the information requested. Therefore, the research is not completed. In the present research, it has not been possible to obtain information from some countries who collaborated in 2006. However, on the other hand, it has been gathered information from countries that in 2006 did not send information. That makes difficult to compare data, but, at the same time, it is interesting to enhance the 'data base' of in-prison treatment programmes being developed in Europe.

In 2006, some prison administrations manifested their plans of designing and implementing in-prison programmes. In any case, the programmes have been implemented.