

**Pressemitteilung****Deutsche Hochschule der Polizei****Dr. Mechthild Hauff**

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überregional**IMPRODOVA research report: Identifying gaps and bridges of intra- und inter-agency cooperation**

**Intra- and interagency cooperation are one key to effectively managing domestic abuse (DA), its consequences and victim protection. Nonetheless, these kinds of cooperation do not represent European standard. IMPRODOVA research explored local initiatives in eight EU-countries to describe good practices of cooperation and to examine what factors facilitate DA-related cooperation and how this benefits victims and perpetrators of DA. Findings indicate that it requires action targeted to priority audiences, a systematic approach of cooperation and information management, promotion of the cooperation and collaborative training to effectively run such collaborative initiatives against DA.**

What the comparative study of local initiatives in 8 European countries tells us about the characteristics of “good partnerships” against domestic violence

This research report outlines how good partnerships against domestic abuse function and describes best practice cases for intra- and inter-agency cooperation explored in the IMPRODOVA countries.

IMPRODOVA is a European H2020 research and innovation project concerning human factors shaping responses to domestic violence. The project studies responses to domestic violence (DV for short) in eight European countries: Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Scotland and Slovenia. IMPRODOVA aims to improve and integrate the response of police, social work, health and non-governmental organizations and other actors making up the ecosystem of frontline responders to DV. The research teams involved in IMPRODOVA brought together 18 analyses of local “good practices” in combating Domestic Violence, covering the eight partner countries. These good practices are either partnerships between actors involved in supporting DV victims, or specialized DV units that have been set up within a large organisation with a more general mission, such as law enforcement agencies, hospital centres or municipalities (local government). The report presents a comprehensive case study of each of the good practices and provides a cross-referenced analysis of the 18 case studies, making it possible to identify the features that characterize the “good practices” of multi-agency cooperation against DV.

This comparative analysis shows that, since victims have multifaceted needs, a single profession cannot provide the kind of support that may alleviate the victims' burden. One way of doing that is collaboration within police stations, with social workers and/or psychologists working hand-in-hand with police officers to assist victims. This is for instance the case in France (the “Embedded Social Worker”) and in Finland (the “Anchor Team”). Social workers who take care of the social-work needs of victims (housing, children, access to poor relief, etc.) allow police officers to focus on victim protection, investigations and procedural aspects of the case.

A second way of doing effective cooperation are concepts and practices of coordinating the response to domestic violence. Getting different professions involved in meaningful partnerships can prove difficult. The Scottish “Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences” (MARAC) is an impressive example of how different worlds (from police to

housing to social work to education) come to talk to each other to make sure that every angle of victims' concerns is addressed. Three core issues are at stake to make partnerships work. First, there must be mechanisms of coordination between actors who sometimes have reservations about working with other professions. One partner needs to have the legitimacy to make people and organizations work together as team partners. Second, in worlds where professional secrecy often is sacred, pragmatic solutions must be found regarding the management of information. Third, trainings must be available so that newcomers can be brought up to speed. Inter-organizational partnerships are not glamorous. But they make a difference, and should be pursued, because they benefit victims.

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wissenschaftliche Ansprechpartner:

Deutsche Hochschule der Polizei

Prof. Dr. Joachim Kersten (joachim.kersten@dhp.de)

Dr. Catharina Vogt (catharina.vogt@dhp.de)

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