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**NATIONAL STRATEGY
FOR PREVENTION AND ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN IN THE FAMILY
AND IN INTIMATE PARTNER RELATIONSHIP**

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*National Strategy
for Prevention and Elimination of Violence
against Women in the Family
and in Intimate Partner Relationship*

Belgrade, May 2011

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Introduction

Our society and institutions have devoted much attention to the problem of domestic violence during last several years. Through joint efforts of civic organizations and government agencies large steps have been made in creating the agenda and mechanisms to prevent violence and protect victims.

According to media reporting, domestic violence is the most common form of violence in our society. One gets the impression that it is constantly increasing, and according to data of women's CSOs, more than 50% of women have experienced some form of domestic or partner violence.

Data of relevant institutions also indicate a continuous increase in reporting of domestic violence cases to the police and to Centres for Social Work.

Our government begins solving the problem of domestic violence in a systematic way by implementing the project "Combating Sexual and Gender Based Violence" of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The realization of the project has been enabled by the Government of the Kingdom of Norway, with the expertise and technical cooperation and support in ensuring the fulfilment of international standards by the United Nations Development Programme.

The aim of this project is to strengthen the capacity of institutions and organizations dealing with victims of violence, as well as the establishment and application of mechanisms that will ensure compliance with international obligations concerning human rights in the area of sexual and gender based violence. The Project also aims at strengthening the legislative framework in the protection of victims and raising public awareness about the unacceptability of violence as a behaviour model, in order to contribute to creating a social environment that would have a preventive function.

Consistent intentions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in connection with solving the problem of domestic violence were proved by the realization of one of the most important activities of the project "Combating Sexual and Gender Based Violence" – the creation and adoption of *the National Strategy for Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women in the Family and in Intimate Partner Relationship*.

The Strategy was adopted at a session of the Serbian Government on the 1st of April, 2011. The text of the mentioned *Strategy* was developed by a working group made up of representatives, experts of civil society organizations, networks of organizations and institutions engaged in protecting victims of sexual and gender based violence. *The National Strategy for Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women in the Family and in Intimate Partner Relationship* should be the initial and guiding document of primary importance in building a comprehensive and quality system for preventing and combating violence against women and protecting victims.

The subject of *the National Strategy for Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women in the Family and in Intimate Partner Relationship* is primarily, though not exclusively, violence against women. Justification of such determination lies in the fact that domestic violence is the most common form of violence against women, while, on the other hand, it is true that women are those who are most often victims of domestic violence.

By adopting the *Strategy* the necessary framework for solving this problem with the synergic action of all actors involved in this area has been set up. Also, tasks and deadlines have been determined that will ensure efficiency in the work of institutions and lead to tangible results and benefits to victims of domestic violence and of intimate partner violence. Implementation of the activities and accomplishment of the objectives outlined in the *Strategy* move Serbia ever closer to the European standards for solving this problem, and we hope to combat as much as possible the occurrence of violence against women.

Snezana Lakicevic

State Secretary

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

National Project Director

Foreword

When you understand and acknowledge that you have a problem, then there is only one thing to do – to start solving it.

Although violence against women has for years been the focus of the struggle of civil society organizations engaged in protecting the rights of women, little has been done to solve the institutional and systemic inequality between women and men, the root of this and many other social problems.

However, we decided to work on this problem, and consequently in 2007 Division for Gender Equality has been established in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which has not been a solution to the problem of gender inequality in our society, but the most important step in that direction has been made. Gender inequality has been recognized in an appropriate manner.

In the following year Division grew into Gender Equality Directorate; *the National Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Women and Promotion of Gender Equality* was adopted in early 2009, which as one of six key strategic goals defines the prevention of violence against women, and at the end of the year *the Law on Gender Equality* was adopted. From 2010 the implementation of the Strategy has begun, in accordance with *the Action Plan for Implementing the National Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Women and Promotion of Gender Equality*, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in August 2010.

Immediately after the formation of the national mechanism for the creation and implementation of gender equality policies in 2007, *National Conference on Combating Violence against Women* was held. The aim of the Conference was the unification of all efforts in the area of combating violence against women and creating a common basis for planning national policy to combat violence against women in accordance with the *Concluding Comments and Recommendations of the CEDAW Committee* and the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

In the course of its work, apart from national and international conferences, round tables, and public addresses, GED organized a series of trainings and educations for civil servants, representatives of local government, journalists and all interested representatives of civil society organizations. By realizing regional and international cooperation, by organizing a network of local mechanisms and civil society organizations, as well as by a number of publications and publicity materials GED has been creating a network of existing capacities for the promotion of gender equality and, at the same time, building new ones.

In creating this Strategy the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee that relate to violence and the recommendations of the Council of Europe were respected. *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* has also been taken into consideration, in whose writing our representative Prof. Dr. Gordana Gasmi took part, as well. The Convention was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, is opened for ratification and we are sure that our country will ratify it.

Division, i.e. Directorate, recognized the problem of violence against women and domestic violence as the most acute one, and solving this problem has become an important task in its work. GED has made most efforts and had most success in dealing with gender based violence, i.e. violence against women. A huge project *Combating Sexual and Gender Based Violence* has been conceived. The Project, in a comprehensive way, deals

with solving the problem of violence against women, improving the whole institutional system in this area through persistent communication with all interested civil actors and the general public.

GED provided the donation of the Kingdom of Norway for the Project, and consequently it has been successfully implemented within Gender Equality Directorate, with technical support from UNDP for last two years.

Adoption of *the National Strategy for Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women in the Family and in Intimate Partner Relationship* is an achievement that makes Gender Equality Directorate very proud. The Strategy is a proof that our society and our institutions and mechanisms for decision-making are willing to combat gender inequality and that the establishment of the executive national mechanism for gender equality was a major step toward solving this social problem.

Dr Natalija Micunovic,

Director of Gender Equality Directorate

Pursuant to Article 45. Paragraph 1 of the Law on Government
(Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 55/05, 71/05-correction, 101/07, 65/08 and 16/11)

The Government adopts

**NATIONAL STRATEGY
FOR PREVENTION AND ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE
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AND IN INTIMATE PARTNER RELATIONSHIP**

1. Introduction

Development of the National Strategy for Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Strategy) is an expression of the Government's determination to, by adhering to international standards and documents on basic human rights protection, promote the protection of women from violence in the family and in intimate partner relationship by providing support to all stakeholders in prevention and elimination of these forms of violence. In this way, the Strategy encourages application of international and domestic legal norms and standards in human rights protection, promotes gender equality and prohibits all forms of violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship, as a form of violence women are most affected by. Development of the Strategy confirms Serbia's involvement in joint activities of the Council of Europe and the European Union aimed at raising public awareness on the issue of violence against women in the family and creating realistic assumptions for efficient prevention of these forms of violence.

The initial framework for Strategy development can be found in the conclusions from the National Conference on Combating Violence against Women, unanimously adopted in 2007. The Conference was held as part of the Council of Europe campaign for combating all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. These conclusions represent guidelines for determining areas of special priority, considering they were brought in democratic consensus of all relevant government and social stakeholders gathered at the National Conference.

National Strategy to Improve the Position of Women and Promote Gender Equality, together with conclusions from the National Conference on Combating Violence against Women, formed a basis for the design of the project Combating Sexual and Gender Based Violence, implemented within the Gender Equality Directorate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which initiated the development of this Strategy. Project outcomes, designed for implementation in the programmatic period 2009 - 2011, were the following:

- 1) Normative framework for protection from violence against women improved.
- 2) Capacities of the system for protection of women from violence raised.
- 3) Research conducted and documentation and statistical information improved.
- 4) Awareness of violence against women as a social issue raised and misrepresentation of women victims of violence in the media eliminated.

The Strategy was adopted in a democratic consensus of relevant government and social stakeholders, starting with the adoption of the National Strategy to Improve the Position of Women and Promote Gender Equality on 13 February 2009, being a milestone

in national gender equality policy making, which determined the fifth strategic area as *Prevention and elimination of violence against women and improving victim protection*. The Strategy development included addressing three groups of tasks:

1) Comparative analysis of EU member and West Balkan region national strategies (the analysis included strategic documents of Albania, Croatia, Slovenia, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, United Kingdom and Sweden) and subsequent definition of the *Initial Framework for Strategy Development*

2) Gathering key information, findings and proposals implemented by various social stakeholders leading a consultative process of participatory planning envisaged to help identify the existing situation and make strategic decisions

3) Strategy development

The analysis of strategic documents in the area of eliminating domestic violence and violence against women, included the review of general and special characteristics of the strategies of Western Balkans countries (Croatia, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania), but also some EU member states which demonstrated a high degree of consideration and respect for a wide range of human rights and liberties (Sweden, United Kingdom, Slovenia and EU member countries in the region).

Comparative analysis of the strategies on elimination of domestic violence offered a possibility for insight in and assessment of different countries' approaches to the problem of prevention and elimination of domestic violence. The best solutions and practice examples found in these strategies were adapted and included in the Strategy.

Information available from different authorities, institutions and civil society organisations (CSOs) were used, was used for situation analysis and presented in the section under that title.

It was of particular importance, during the drafting of the Strategy, to identify and list specific and particularly vulnerable groups, with a high number of victims, or whose members are particularly affected by the consequences of violence. In this respect, the Strategy places special focus on the groups of women exposed (or could be exposed) to multiple discrimination, as well as vulnerable groups of women, including: women with disabilities, Roma women, mothers of children with disabilities, developmental disabilities or chronic diseases, rural women, elderly women, refugee and internally displaced women and other. The Strategy also considers the issue of children affected by domestic violence (in defining target groups, the Strategy includes also the Council of Europe Recommendation 1905 (2010) on the necessity to protect children witnesses of domestic violence, adopted in March 2010, which refers to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Resolution 1714 (2010) on children who witness domestic violence). United Nations 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child defines the child as any human being below the age of eighteen years.

The Strategy also contains mechanisms for its implementation. On the other hand, in implementing coordinated action locally, it is not always necessary or always possible to take over models and structures of bodies or committees existing on the national level, but existing similar local committees and coordination bodies should be practically examined and put into operation. This is particularly important in cases of smaller communities with limited human and material resources. For this reason, the Strategy determines implementers of activities and partners on the national and local levels and inter-institutional cooperation (content and forms of cooperation), as well as stakeholders' responsibilities in the Strategy implementation.

In the process of Strategy development, consultations were held with CSO representatives, judiciary and public administration authorities (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Republican Institute for Social Protection; Labour, Employment and Gender Equality Secretariat of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, and local gender equality bodies), as well as experts engaged with the project Combating Sexual and Gender Based Violence.

Representatives of the following CSOs participated in the Strategy preparation:

- Association of Roma Women *Dawn*, Nis
- Women Against Violence Network
- *Labris* – organisation for lesbian human rights
- *Out of Circle*, organisation for the protection of rights and support to persons with disabilities in Serbia
- Incest Trauma Centre
- Women Health Promotion Centre
- Safety Oasis, Kragujevac
- Counselling Service against Family Violence

Representatives of the Provincial Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina also participated in Strategy development.

Activities on Strategy development were coordinated by the Gender Equality Directorate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy as part of the Combating Sexual and Gender Based Violence project, and in the course of Strategy development the Victimology Society of Serbia was consulted.

2. Reasons for Strategy adoption

Domestic violence is the most common form of violence against women and its consequences are reflected on many segments in the lives of violence victims – housing, health, education and freedom to live their lives without fear and the way they choose (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Resolution 1582, 2002). The government is responsible to protect the victims of domestic violence. Otherwise the violence is tacitly approved.

European Court of Human Rights is of the stand that governments are not responsible only to provide adequate legal framework to combat domestic violence, but also to ensure its effective implementation and that international practice strongly suggests that domestic violence perpetrators be persecuted if there is enough evidence even when the violence victim withdraws criminal charges or abandons them.

Statistical data of Serbian authorities and services demonstrate an increase in reported cases of violence over the years. Strategy adoption is also based on the fact that national and international legal documents bind Serbia to undertake all available measures to prevent violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship, protect the victims of violence to the greatest possible extent, and punish the perpetrators accordingly, pursuant to the Concluding Comments of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In this respect, the Strategy is the baseline and guideline document of primary importance in developing a comprehensive and high quality system for prevention and elimination of violence against women and protection of the victims of violence. One of the reasons for adopting the Strategy is the prevention of abuse in combating violence.

The Task Force responsible for drafting the Strategy considered and incorporated the measures of the Council of Europe Ad Hoc Committee (CAHVIO), participating in the development of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, by which a proactive approach was taken and recommended to the Government in combating these forms of discrimination against women. Other strategic documents were also used during Strategy development:

- 1) National Strategy to Improve the Position of Women and Promote Gender Equality (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 15/09)
- 2) National Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 122/08) and Action Plan (2010-2012) for the implementation of this strategy (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 15/10)
- 3) Strategy for Protection from Domestic and other Forms of Gender Based Violence in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina for the period 2008 - 2012
- 4) Public Health Strategy for the Republic of Serbia (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 22/09)
- 5) Strategy for the Development of Mental Health Care (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 8/07)
- 6) Strategy for Youth Development and Health in the Republic of Serbia (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 104/06)
- 7) Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 27/09)
- 8) Social Welfare Development Strategy (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 108/05)
- 9) National Strategy on Ageing (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 76/06)
- 10) Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 1/07)
- 11) Official Statistics Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 111/06)
- 12) National Youth Strategy (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 55/08)
- 13) National Millennium Development Goals in the Republic of Serbia

This strategy recognizes findings, opinions and recommendations included in the above strategies.

3. Key international documents and national legislation underpinning the Strategy

The most important international documents forming the basis for the Strategy:

1) UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948)

2) UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the most important international treaty in the area of women rights. The 1992 CEDAW General Recommendation No. 19 requires taking all the necessary measures to abolish discrimination against women and eliminate violence against women, including the adoption of special regulations on all forms of violence against women, criminal sanctions for violence perpetrators, civil legal remedies, prevention and protection measures.

3) UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) specifies actions for the government to take in order to eliminate domestic violence, which include appropriate criminal legislature, national action plans, services and resources for women violence victims, training and sensitising civil servants regarding gender issues, as well as allocate budgetary resources with the aim to combat violence against women.

4) UN Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2003/45 dedicated to the elimination of violence against women stresses that States have “an affirmative duty to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls and must exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish acts of all forms of violence against women and girls”.

5) UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) stresses that States shall undertake “all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical and mental violence”.

6) UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) in Article 6 points out that States Parties recognize that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination, and in this regard shall take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by them of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

7) Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) in the area of domestic violence says that the priority issue is to review and revise legislation and take other necessary measures, together with creating appropriate mechanisms in order to ensure that all women enjoy protection from domestic violence, and that violence should be treated as offence and prosecuted (124-126). This document defines domestic violence as “... any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.

8) Millennium Development Goals, adopted at the UN Millennium Summit (2000). The third Millennium Development Goal is to promote gender equality and empower women.

9) Recommendation No. R (90) 2E of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on social measures concerning violence in the family is related to general preventive measures and specific measures in the area of information provision, early detection of violence, reporting violence, providing help and therapy (SOS telephone lines, crisis services and counselling centres), measures for children, measures for women, measures for the perpetrators of violence, educational measures (e.g. establishment of preventive programmes in schools), etc.

10) Recommendation 1450 (2000) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on violence against women in Europe with the aim to harmonise legislation in member states and improve the system of protection for violence victims.

11) Recommendation 1582 (2002) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on violence against women in family encourages member states to “recognise that they have an obligation to prevent, investigate and punish all acts of domestic violence and to provide protection to its victims”.

12) Recommendation 2002 (5) of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on the protection of women against violence encourages the governments of member states to develop national action plans for prevention of violence and protection of violence victims, as well as to establish a government coordination body in charge of implementation and monitoring or evaluation of the measures to combat all forms of violence against women. A series of concrete measures was proposed for the states to undertake relating to raising public awareness, organising training and education, research and data collection, media, local, regional and urban planning, protection of the victims of violence and programmes for perpetrators. Changes were also recommended (if necessary) in the area of criminal and civil legislature and court proceedings.

13) Recommendation 1681 (2004) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – “Campaign to combat domestic violence against women in Europe” stresses that: “The acute nature of this problem must force Council of Europe member states to regard domestic violence as a national political priority and to deal with it in a broader political framework, with government, parliament and civil society involvement. Member states have an obligation under international law to act with due diligence to take effective steps to end violence against women, including domestic violence, and to protect its victims/survivors. If they do not themselves want to be held responsible, states must take effective measures to prevent and punish such acts by individuals and to protect the victims/survivors” (Article 2).

14) Recommendation 1905 (2010) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, adopted in March 2010, indicates the necessity to protect children witnesses of domestic violence, referring to Resolution 1714 (2010) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on children witnesses of domestic violence.

National legislation of the Republic of Serbia:

1) Constitution of the Republic of Serbia provides that the government shall guarantee equality of women and men and develop equal opportunities policy (Article 15), prohibits all direct or indirect discrimination based on any grounds, particularly on the origin of sex (Article 21, Paragraph 3), guarantees the right to equal legal protection (Article 21, Paragraph 2), legal assistance (Article 67), right to rehabilitation and compensation of material or non-material damage inflicted by unlawful or irregular work of a government or other body (Article 35), judicial protection of human and minority rights guaranteed by the Constitution, including addressing international institutions in order to protect their freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Constitution (Article 22), guarantees the inviolability of physical and mental integrity (Article 25, Paragraph 1), prohibits slavery or servitude, as well as all forms of human trafficking (Article 26, Paragraphs 1 and 2), guarantees protection of children from psychological, physical, economic and any

other form of exploitation or abuse (Article 64, Paragraph 3), guarantees special protection to families, mothers, single parents and children (Article 66), guarantees equality and representation of different genders and members of national minorities, in accordance with the Law (Article 100, Paragraph 2), etc.

It is of special importance to say that the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia in Article 18, Paragraph 3 stipulates that provisions on human and minority rights shall be interpreted to the benefit of promoting values of a democratic society, pursuant to valid international standards in human and minority rights, as well as the practice of international institutions which supervise their implementation.

2) Criminal Code (Official Gazette of the RS, 85/05, 88/05 – correction, 107/05 – correction, 72/09 and 111/09).

3) Criminal Procedure Code (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 70/01 and 68/02 and Official Gazette of the RS, No. 58/04, 85/05 – other law, 85/05, 115/05, 46/06, 49/07, 122/08, 20/09 – other law, 72/09 and 76/10).

4) Family Law (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 18/05).

5) Law on Public Order and Peace (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 51/92, 53/93-other law, 67/93-other law, 48/94 – other law, 85/05 - other law and 101/05 – other law).

6) Law on Juvenile Criminal Offenders and Protection of Juveniles (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 85/05 and 72/09).

7) Law on the Protection Programme for Participants in Criminal Proceedings (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 85/05).

8) Law on Enforcement of Penal Sanctions (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 85/05 and 72/09).

9) Law on Police (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 9/92, 53/93, 67/93, 48/94, 44/98, 39/03, 85/05 – other law and 101/2005 – other law).

10) Law on Weapons and Ammunition (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 9/92, 53/93, 67/93, 48/94, 44/98, 39/03, 85/05 – other law and 101/2005 – other law).

11) Law on Gender Equality (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 104/09).

12) Anti Discrimination Law (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 22/09).

13) Law on Social Protection and Providing Social Security of Citizens (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 36/91, 79/91 – other law, 33/93- other law, 53/93 – other law, 67/93, 67/93 – other law, 46/94, 48/94 – other law, 52/96, 29/01, 84/04, 101/05 – other law and 115/05).

14) Law on Personal Data Protection (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 97/08 and 104/09 – other law).

4. Strategy subject, definitions and basic concepts

Violence against women is the result of a disbalance in power between women and men. According to the General Recommendation 19 of the UN CEDAW Committee (1992) violence against women is a form of discrimination within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and should be considered serious violation of women's human rights: "The Convention in Article 1 defines discrimination against women. The definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence, that is, violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. Gender-based violence may breach specific provisions of the Convention, regardless of whether those provisions expressly mention violence." (This definition is used also in the 2006 UN Secretary-General in-depth study on all forms of violence against women).

United Nations 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines key forms of violence against women stipulating that such violence can be of physical, sexual or psychological nature and it can manifest: 1) in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and non-spousal violence; 2) within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse and sexual harassment and intimidation at work and 3) violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

Violence against family members differs from violence outside the family. Domestic violence always presents *abuse of power and control* over family members with less power or smaller resources. In the majority of societies, particularly in traditional and patriarchal communities, men have significantly more power – not only physical, but also economic and social.

Having in mind that certain aspects of violence against women and combating these forms of violence have been dealt with in special strategic and political documents (e.g. human trafficking), as well as some forms of domestic violence and their prevention and elimination have also been the subject of special strategic documents and action plans (e.g. violence against children), *the subject of the Strategy is primarily, although not exclusively, violence against women in the family*. This determination is justified in the fact that domestic violence is the most common form of violence against women, while, on the other hand, it is also true that women are most commonly the victims of domestic violence.

Domestic violence means "all acts of physical, sexual and psychological violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim" as determined in Article 2 of *Draft Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*¹.

Domestic violence includes different *forms and manifestations* (Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence in Autonomous Province of Vojvodina for the Period 2008 – 2012):

Physical violence includes and is not limited to: pushing, shoving, hair-pulling, hitting, kicking, biting, strangling, stabbing, physical torture, battering and murder.

¹ Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence was adopted on April 7, 2011. Article 2 of Draft Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence became Article 3 of the adopted Convention.

Severity of injuries varies from the minimal to the serious ones (fractures, contusions, bruises), permanent injuries and death.

Sexual violence involves any sexual activity without the consent including: sexual teasing, undesired comments, unwanted sexual proposals, forced participation in or watching of pornography, unwanted touching, painful and degrading sexual acts, forced sexual intercourse, rape and incest.

Psychological (mental, emotional) violence includes and is not limited to: belittling, insulting, ignoring, taking advantage of privileges, swearing, derision, ridicule, reproach, threats and coercion (with or without the use of tools and weapons which may cause physical injuries), intimidation, isolation, contempt, harassment, blaming, children manipulation, verbal assaults.

Economic violence includes and is not limited to: unequal access to common funds, withholding/controlling the access to money, prevention of employment or education and professional advancement, deprivation of the right to property, forced renunciation of the property or requesting the property which she renounced/intended to renounce back, selling of belongings without the consent of the man/woman owner, that is, forced sale.

In the national legislation, according to the Family Law, domestic violence means “behaviour by which one family member threatens physical integrity, mental health or peace of another family member” (Article 197, Paragraph 1). The circle of persons provided with protection from domestic violence is broad and exceeds classical definitions of family members. Thus, in order to access protection from domestic violence, the Family Law defines the following family members:

- 1) spouses or former spouses
- 2) children, parents and other blood relations, persons in-law or in adoptive relations or persons associated with foster care
- 3) persons living or used to live in the same family household
- 4) extra marital partners or former extra marital partners
- 5) persons in a former or current emotional or sexual relationship, or having a child together, or a child on the way to be born, even though they have never lived in the same family household.

The Criminal Code determines that domestic violence is perpetrated by anyone who, by use of violence, threat of attacks against life or body, insolent or ruthless behaviour, endangers the tranquillity, physical integrity or mental condition of a member of their family. However, the family member is defined in the Criminal Code more narrowly than in the Family Law, which reduces chances for legal protection of victims in all forms of domestic violence. The Criminal Code defines the following family members: spouses, their children, lineal blood relatives, extra marital partners and their children, adoptive parent or adopted child, foster parent and foster child, as well as sibling, their spouses and children if sharing the same household, whereas persons who have a child together or a child on the way to be born are considered family members even though they have never lived in the same family household.

Pursuant to the above international documents, the Strategy focuses on both prevention of the occurrence of violence by stipulating measures and activities to prevent the occurrence and on eliminating negative consequences and manifestations of the perpetrated violence, including also measures to protect violence victims.

5. Situation analysis

Defining strategic objectives and courses of action is based on a detailed analysis of violence against women and domestic violence, including the results of research so far conducted on the distribution and characteristics of violence, official statistics and relevant authorities and services, as well as practical knowledge of CSOs providing services and support to violence victims. Defining strategic objectives included reviewing data on law enforcement, responsibilities and capacities of authorities and institutions.

5.1 Overview of research conducted on the distribution and forms of violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship

The first studies on the extent and characteristics of violence against women were carried out by CSOs.

In 2001, the Victimology Society of Serbia conducted the first quantitative research on domestic violence in the Republic of Serbia. At this time domestic violence had not as yet been incriminated as a criminal offence in Serbia. Research was conducted in seven towns (Belgrade, Subotica, Novi Sad, Vrnjacka Banja, Zajecar, Uzice and Nis) and around 40 villages on the territory of the Republic of Serbia (excluding Kosovo and Metohija), on a sample of 700 adult women, interviewed individually, based on previously developed questionnaires. The women who carried out the survey recorded cases when women refused to be surveyed: there were 440 such cases on 700 completed surveys, which makes 39%. The following results, relevant for strategic planning, were received:

1) Distribution of different forms of violence. Every third respondent from the survey experienced physical assault by some family member (most often by husband or partner, that is, former husband or partner). In 7% cases, the violence was performed with the use of a knife, gun or other weapon or tool. One in four respondents (26% of women surveyed) experienced threats of severe physical violence, murder or infliction of serious bodily injuries. Nearly one in two women in the sample (46% of respondents) experienced some form of psychological domestic violence: humiliation and contempt, isolation, economic violence, threats and intimidation and similar. In the majority of cases, the perpetrator of physical violence was the spouse or partner, followed by: father, mother, mother- or father-in-law, and less often other family members. Sexual domestic violence after coming of age was experienced by 9% of women from the sample, most often by spouse or partner, or former partner, whereas less often the sexual violator would have been father-in-law, brother-in-law or other family member. It should be noted that in over 70% of domestic violence cases the perpetrator was current or former spouse or partner of the respondent, which suggests that the predominant form of domestic violence is intimate partner violence.

2) Rates of reporting to relevant authorities and services. An important finding of this survey was that reporting rates to relevant authorities and services were low. Among the women who experienced violence, a small number reported the last violent incident to the police (17%), to centres for social work (10%), or health institutions (15%), and 4% of violence cases had a court epilogue. The reasons for not reporting the violence were different. For example, the reasons for not reporting violence to the police were the following, in order of frequency: a) violence victims who considered the last violent incident not to have been serious enough to require police intervention; b) they were ashamed; c) they were afraid the violence would escalate; d) they did not trust the police to be able to help them;

e) they had had previous experience of police not wanting to interfere with domestic violence. Out of the total number of women who had experienced violence, 2% reported the last violent incident to a CSO.

3) Victimization of children and the consequences of violence in childhood. The findings indicate a high degree of direct or indirect victimization of children in violence against their mothers. In over one-third of the cases (38%), the children witnessed the last event of violence, while in nearly one-half of these cases they were also the victims of violence (44%). Information about the long-term consequences of childhood violence to the exposure of adult women to violence (this phenomenon is called “transgenerational transmission”) are the following: 36% women – victims of physical violence (compared to 15% of those who had not been victims of violence) said that their fathers had been violent to their mothers, 41% of violence victims (compared to 19% of those who were not) themselves suffered physical violence in childhood. On the other hand, a significant correlation was determined in primary families between men and their subsequent violent behaviours: 32% of violence perpetrators come from families where fathers were violent to their mothers, and 32% were direct victims of childhood violence.

The next research on distribution of violence against women in the family was conducted as part of the Women’s Health Programme of the Autonomous Women’s Centre in 2003 on the territory of Belgrade (on a representative sample of Belgrade urban population), within a broader World Health Organisation (WHO) study on violence in intimate partner relationships and women’s health. The research was conducted within a cross-cultural study on women’s health and domestic violence against women (*The Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women*), designed and carried out by WHO, according to a unique methodology in ten countries in the world on a total sample of over 24,000 women. In Serbia the study included 1,456 women (age 15-49 years) living in 11 Belgrade city municipalities with a total population of approximately 1,300,000. Out of the total number of households with women, 40% refused to participate in the research. Violence by intimate partners was studied by interviewing all the women who had been in the course of their lifetime involved in an intimate partner relationship. The research objectives were the following: provide reliable estimate of the frequency of physical, sexual and psychological violence against women, assess the links between intimate partner violence and its effects to the health, determine the factors of protection or threats to the women, as well as the strategies and services used to protect themselves from violence.

The following findings are relevant for planning strategic measures in the Strategy:

1) According to the research results, 23% of respondents said they had experienced physical violence, while 6% reported sexual violence by intimate partner, 24% of respondents had experienced physical or sexual violence in the course of their lives, while 4% had experienced sexual violence in the period of 12 months prior to the research. Furthermore, 30% of respondents who reported physical violence said that they had sustained bodily injuries, with 36% hurt more than five times.

2) The results of this research are important in indicating the impact of intimate partner violence on women’s health. According to this research, 9% of respondents who survived physical or sexual violence characterise their overall health as poor or very poor in comparison with 4% of respondents with the same answer who have not been abused.

Respondents who reported violence had had more induced abortions (65% to 45%), as well as still-born children (5% to 2%), and 22% of respondents had thought of suicide, whereas this was the case with 7% respondents who had not experienced violence.

3) The research also provides basis for understanding the type of support used by the respondents who experienced violence. According to research results, 27% women who reported physical violence had not spoken to anyone about their experience; 53% confided in friends; 28% in parents and 26% in relatives. Even 78% of physically abused women had never sought assistance with relevant authorities or services. 12% turned to the police, 10% to health institutions and 6-9% turned to social and legal services for assistance. None of the respondents asked for help in safe houses. The main reason the respondents asked for help was that they could no longer endure the violence (63%), severe injuries (30%) or children suffering (12%), while 8% of respondents sought assistance because their intimate partner threatened to kill them and 5% because he threatened to batter the children.

The latest data on distribution and characteristics of violence in the family come from the Serbian Victimology Society study, carried out in 2009 on a sample of adult women on the territory of AP Vojvodina. It was conducted on a sample of 516 adult women from seven towns (Novi Sad, Subotica, Zrenjanin, Pancevo, Sombor, Sremska Mitrovica and Kikinda) and 40 surrounding villages. Out of 907 women approached by the women surveyors, 402 (43%) refused to participate in the study. The women surveyors were trained to conduct the interviews structured on previously designed questionnaire. The results were the following:

1) Out of the total number of respondents, 56% experienced some form of violence after coming of age. One in two women (49%) were exposed to psychological violence, 34% women were exposed to physical violence, 27% to threats of physical violence, 19% to persecution (most often by present or former spouse, or intimate partner), and 9% of the respondents said they had experienced sexual violence. Psychological violence was most often in the form of humiliation and contempt. Physical violence perpetrators are most often present or former spouse, or intimate partner (in 64% cases), followed by father, mother and mother-in-law. Threats of physical assault (including threats of murder, battering, mutilation, limb breaking) were most often directed by the current or former spouse, or intimate partner. The severity of threats is demonstrated in the finding that in 87% of the cases the violator did afterwards actually attack the victim physically. Data on persecution indicate the need for adequate institutional protection of women. Namely, 51% of women who had temporarily or permanently left their spouses were subsequently persecuted by the violent partner. Persecution most often included calling on the phone with different motives (threats, checking, blackmail), and then waiting by residence or breaking in the house or flat, following, sending threatening or insulting text messages, waiting after work or perpetrator's visits to the work place or university, or as persecution in all of the above ways. Existential issues are most often the reason for staying in the violent relationship (many violence victims have nowhere to go, nor means of support).

2) The study identified factors associated with domestic violence: a) women of lower level of education are more often exposed to physical violence; b) poor or unstable material situation is associated with more frequent occurrence of all forms of domestic violence,

except persecution; c) women who have children are more exposed to physical violence; d) two patterns of relations between economic roles of partners and violence were found: women are more exposed to psychological violence and threats of physical violence in situations of economic dependence, and man's economic dominance, or – when they are the main breadwinners, and their intimate partner is economically dependent on them or other family members (this pattern is in literature called the phenomenon of status incompatibility, i.e. change in traditional male and female gender roles, and it is confirmed in cross-cultural research in transitional countries); e) in ethnically mixed families there is more psychological violence, threats of physical violence and physical violence; f) poor housing conditions are in correlation with all forms of violence in the family; g) data also tell of indirect effects of the conflicts in the former SFRY on domestic violence: 25% of violence perpetrators had participated in the conflicts, and one in five perpetrators (among those that participated in the conflict) used a weapon during the last violent act.

3) Former findings of children being affected by violence against their mothers were confirmed. During the last violent incident, children were present in one half of the cases, and 36% of children were also directly exposed to violence. The effects of violence in the victim's primary family or that of the perpetrator were also confirmed: 44% of women victims of physical domestic violence said that their father had been violent to their mother, and 32% of them had been indirect victims of violence in their childhood. Among violence perpetrators, 28% were exposed to different forms of violence in childhood.

4) Data on violence reporting rates to relevant authorities and services indicate that victims of violence rarely turn to relevant authorities and services, and those who have decided to take that step are often not satisfied with the interventions provided. Police assistance during the last violent incident was sought by 23% of victims of violence, while 18% victims turned to centres for social work and 30% sought assistance in health care institutions for injuries (mainly for fractures and dislocations). In 10% cases court proceedings were brought against the perpetrator (in most cases the perpetrator was fined), and in 5% cases domestic violence measures were ordered, in accordance with the Family Law.

The victims of violence that were not satisfied with police intervention (57% of those that had turned to the police) gave the following reasons as cause for their dissatisfaction: inertia and lack of interest with the police to react, inefficient intervention, inadequate training for work with violence victims. Victims of violence that were not satisfied with the Centre for Social Work (CSW) intervention (61% of those that had turned to this service) gave the following reasons of dissatisfaction: CSW officers did nothing to help; help given was inadequate; lack of understanding for the problem; lack of empathy; taking sides with the violator. The majority of violence victims who turned to health services (87%) were satisfied with the supporting and professional attitude of medical staff and the fact that they received medical certificate of the injuries sustained. 4% of the victims turned to some association and none sought assistance from a safe house. The research also showed that women were still unfamiliar with their legal rights: 38% did not know that violence in the family is a criminal offence. The majority of women (61%) knew there were measures for protection from violence under the Family Law, but their knowledge was abstract (they heard of the possibility but did not know what concrete measures were available to them).

In order to plan strategic measures for protection against domestic violence more adequately, it is necessary to take into account the specific problems of vulnerable or multiply discriminated categories of women, such as Roma women, women with disabilities, rural women, women that have under the influence of domestic violence become criminal offenders, etc. The book *Victim to Offender* published 20 case studies of women serving prison sentences, who, after years of suffering domestic violence murdered the violator. The studies have shown that the majority of these women also suffered violence in childhood. The pattern of reaction of the environment to violence they were exposed to, came down to encouraging passivity and endurance, while none of the perpetrators were punished for the violence committed. The study indicated the problem of inadequate social reaction, having in mind that at the time of the study, domestic violence was not incriminated as a criminal offence.

There are very few available quantitative data on violence against Roma women and girls, while comprehensive research studies focusing on violence against women from different vulnerable, or multiply discriminated categories do not exist.

Roma Women Centre *Bibija* research carried out in 2010 on a sample of 150 participants (ages 17 to 50 years) living predominantly in four informal Roma settlements on the territories of Belgrade and Krusevac. The data were obtained by using individual interviews, conducted by activists of the Roma Women Centre *Bibija* from Belgrade and Roma Women Association *Romano Alav* from Krusevac, who were previously trained in methodology. The research participants had previously gone through a four-month workshop as a part of a project on prevention of violence, which created an atmosphere of trust (out of 169 women who attended the workshops, 150 agreed to participate in the research, with guarantee of anonymity). The results of the research demonstrated that all participants were exposed to some form of domestic violence – most often physical (the predominant form of violence against respondents of any age). Second by frequency was psychological, and then economic (most prominent in the age group 40-45 years) and sexual violence, and 90% respondents said that children had been or still were witnesses of violence. The research indicated to reasons why the violence was rarely reported to relevant authorities and services among Roma women, and 90% respondents considered that Roma women victims of violence did not turn to relevant authorities and services out of fear they would not get adequate protection from the violator. To the question of when the victim of violence would speak of the violence, nearly 90% of respondents said they would do so *when they would no longer be able to endure the abuse*.

Other research focused on the issue of sexual violence against youth by family members, but also other categories of perpetrators. The first quantitative research of sexual violence against high school youth was carried out in 1999, and in the following years a series of studies on this topic was conducted on a nationally representative sample of almost 4,000 high school students (boys and girls). The research was conducted by using an anonymous questionnaire with 14 different forms of sexual abuse, and all available procedures to protect anonymity. Nearly 4,000 high school boys and girls participated in the studies in over 25 towns in the Republic of Serbia, so the sample can be considered representative for the high school population in the country. The study objectives were to examine distribution of 14 forms of sexual violence (rape, group rape, attempt of rape, incest, blackmail or threat, deception, sexual exploitation by abuse of authority or position, forced prostitution, sexual abuse of a child under 13 years, as well as people with disabilities, sexual harassment, etc.), as well as sexual violence patterns, social reaction to

events of violence and attitudes of young people toward relevant authorities and services, with the following results:

1) In different stages of the research, between 8 and 12% of girls said they had experienced some of the above forms of sexual abuse. In one of the studies, one in eight high school girls from the sample reported personal experience of sexual violence or harassment – in this phase, research was conducted in parallel with an educational programme on different forms of violence in intimate partner relationships (such programmes demonstrated to increase the chances of encouraging young people to describe personal experiences of sexual abuse in the questionnaire). Namely, in order to enable a methodologically valid test of the hypothesis that educational programmes increase chances of encouraging young people to describe personal experiences in the questionnaire, in this phase of the research there was an experimental and a control group. The experimental group consisted of 653 high school boys and girls from seven towns in Serbia who attended the educational programme on sexual violence and violence in intimate partner relationships, adapted to the needs of young people of this age. The control group consisted of an approximately equal number of high school boys and girls who were not included in educational programmes. In accordance with methodology, the control group was equal to the experimental group by age, sex, type of school (high vocational or grammar school) and place of residence.

2) Victims of sexual violence are in most cases underage girls, while violators are adult men mostly known or close to the victim of violence – in around 70% of the cases sexual violence perpetrator was a friend, former or current intimate partner, family friend, family member, or a relative, superior person (teacher, professor, instructor), step-father, guardian or adoptive parent, or foster parent, acquaintance or neighbour.

3) Despite their grave and illegal nature, cases of sexual violence are by rule not reported to relevant authorities or services (police, psychological counselling centres, health institutions or any other organisation). A total of 16% of the cases of sexual abuse had been reported to the police. The most common reasons for not reporting the cases of sexual abuse were: fear of the victim of violence from rejection, or judgement of the environment or fear of revenge from the violator. Based on this information, it can be assumed that the statistics of relevant services and SOS lines on reported cases of sexual violence against young people are actually just “the tip of the iceberg”.

Research should help determine effective measures to prevent these forms of violence. Without data it is hard to determine which interventions and measures are successful in combating violence against women. In this respect, research should be continued and expanded.

5.2. Statistical data on cases of violence reported to relevant authorities and services

International documents instruct systematic data collection on all forms of violence against women, aggregating them on the national level and publishing, as well as performing periodical analyses in order to monitor trends and assess reliably government measures for elimination and prevention of violence. CEDAW Committee in its 2007 Concluding Comments indicated the need to improve the system of records: “The Committee encourages State Party to establish systematic and regular data collection and analysis on all forms of violence against women in order to strengthen the knowledge base for efficient policy and programme development, including prevention efforts, monitoring tendencies over time and making the findings available to the public.”

It is necessary to develop special strategic measures in order to fulfil the above Committee recommendation, having in mind that, for the time being, a unique system of recording cases of violence against women does not exist in the Republic of Serbia. Even though different entities providing protection to violence victims, or prosecuting and punishing perpetrators (police, CSWs, prosecutors’ offices and courts) record individual cases of violence, the differences in the content and the method of keeping records make data comparison as well as their aggregation on the national level impossible.

The problem of insufficient coordination of activities around interventions in cases of domestic violence is also noticeable in the area of record keeping, resulting in an incomplete picture on these forms of violence.

According to data from relevant authorities and services, an increasing number of cases of domestic violence are reported to the police and CSWs. The Association of Misdemeanour Judges of Serbia research, carried out between 1 January 2004 and 31 July 2006 recorded 50,127 events of domestic violence with police intervention. It should be noted that this is the total number of interventions, not the total number of events of violence, so it would be right to assume that the police intervened in some events of violence several times. On the other hand, we should have in mind (based on the above CSO research conducted on a sample of women from the general population) that the so-called “dark number” of violence is very high.

According to CSW data, an increase in the number of victims’ growth index is notable between 2005 and 2009. The number of adult victims of violence was increased 11 times between 2005 and 2009. The following tables show the increase in recorded cases of violence.

Table. Number of children and youth victims of violence recorded by CSW

Territory	Children and youth – victims of violence				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Central Serbia	1,225	1,556	1,401	1,452	1,561
Vojvodina	709	968	528	889	869
Kosovo and Metohija	48	54	50	6	26
Belgrade	293	193	281	811	865
Total Serbia	2,275	2,771	2,260	3,158	3,321
growth index	100.0	121.8	99.3	138.8	145.9

Table. Number of adult and senior victims of violence recorded by CSW

Territory	Adults and seniors – victims of violence				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Central Serbia	374	1,078	1,964	1,973	3,382
Vojvodina	195	1,176	962	1,119	2,028
Kosovo and Metohija	19	34	43	4	39
Belgrade	82	155	145	1,458	2,071
Total Serbia	670	2,443	3,114	4,554	7,520
growth index	100.0	364.6	464.8	679.7	1,122.4

Total number of reported victims of violence in 2009 was 7,520, out of which number the majority were adults, and women and female children together more than two-thirds.

Table. Total number of reported family members victims of violence and their structure by sex

Members – victims of violence	Female	Male	Total
Children	1,707	1,419	3,126
Adults	3,270	341	3,611
Seniors	569	214	783

Between 2006 and 2009, in the total number of cases of domestic violence (including violence against children), the structure of perpetrators is dominated by intimate partners.

Table. Number of families that reported domestic violence by violence perpetrator

Perpetrator	Number of families			
	2006	2007	2008	2009
Father	976	863	1,211	1,281
Mother	432	219	316	274
Both parents	605	193	244	200
Brother/sister	119	608	837	115
Spouse/intimate partner	133	1,496	2,434	2,310
Other	18	93	191	898
Total number of families reported	2,283	3,472	5,133	5,078

According to the Association of Misdemeanour Judges of Serbia, the total number of legally finalised misdemeanour cases with an element of domestic violence in 2004 was 7,080. In these cases 7,493 victims of violence were recorded (two-thirds were women, and one-third men) and 7,542 violence perpetrators (89% men and 11% women). 46% of these were cases of intimate partner violence. Violence of children against their parents was recorded in 18% cases, violence against relatives in 16%, violence of parents against children in 11%, while violence of children against other children in the family happened in 9% cases.

5.3. Findings from CSO practice

Civil society organisations, especially associations of women, have in the past twenty years developed many types of services for individuals who experienced abuse from intimate partners. Actually, these organisations have in the past twenty years operated in different areas: service provision to violence victims, prevention, training and education of professionals and raising public awareness, as well as developing multi-sectoral cooperation.

Experiences of the Social Innovations Fund (SIF) – a programme of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy indicate the existence of significant capacities and resources of civil society organisations in the area of service provision to victims of domestic violence. In addition to the fact that civil society has resources for possible decentralisation of social protection services, SIF experiences indicate the necessity of establishing partnerships between the civil and the government sectors in providing social protection services. Considering the important experience of civil society organisations, as well as their expertise in the area of prevention and elimination of violence against women and domestic violence, the cooperation between the civil sector and authorities and services providing protection to violence victims is a desired and necessary step in improving the system of protection for victims of violence, which is tailor-made. The facts about the work of CSOs in this area are also supported by the results of research on services that these organisations provide in the area of violence against women and domestic violence. According to this research there are 54 associations with different types of support – for women, men and children (25), women and children (19), only women (6), women and men (3). Autonomous Women's Centre coordinates 21 associations that provide services to victims of domestic and sexual violence and trafficking. Since 2005, the Network of Women against Violence has spread progressively, and today it gathers a total of 28 women organisations Serbia wide providing services to individuals who have experienced violence.

Civil society organisations that have developed services for protection against violence, have built expertise and shared knowledge on certain forms of violence, as well as on vulnerable groups who have for different reasons not been included in the service provision system, but have done so through ongoing cooperation with the public sector. Practical information and experience of organisations such as: Association of Roma Women *Dawn*, Autonomous Women Centre, *Labris*, Out of Circle, Incest Trauma Centre, Counselling against Family Violence and many other.

Experiences of the Roma Women Association *Dawn* from Nis indicate the existence of prejudice and stereotypes about Roma in the social community, so that cases of discrimination against Roma women victims of domestic violence by the staff with authorities and services in charge of their protection were recorded. This indicates the need to sensitise them for working with victims of violence from minority groups.

In some cases good cooperation was established in the protection of Roma women, which has given positive results. According to this organisation's data, between 2006 and end of 2009, 800 Roma women and 176 women from the majority population called the Romani language SOS line run by this organisation. Out of this number, only three Roma women were permanently employed, while the majority was employed but not registered for benefits (house keepers, collectors of secondary materials together with children or employed in grey economy). The majority of respondents that suffered violence by spouses or intimate partners connected this behaviour to the violator's alcoholism, unemployment, gambling, adultery and drug use.

According to Autonomous Women Centre data, between 2000 and 2009 this association was approached by 5,660 women who experienced violence in the family (data based on aggregating data from annual reports in the period of ten years). Perpetrators were in 94% male, and intimate partner violence happened in 75% cases. The data on the duration of violence are disturbing – in 8% cases the violence lasted up to one year, in 20% cases from one to four years, in 18% cases from five to ten years, over ten years in 14% cases, over 20 years in 9% cases and over 30 years in 3% of the cases. The mechanisms used by women before coming to this organisation were: turning to the police in 28% cases, going to the centre for social work in 18% cases, using the services of marriage counselling and psychotherapy in 3% cases, starting legal proceedings in 10% cases, leaving the violator in 15% cases, going to the doctor in 12% cases, etc.

According to the information from *Labris* – organisation for lesbian human rights, among their beneficiaries, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender women become victims of multiple discrimination and are often exposed to different forms of violence in our society due to a high degree of homophobia and prejudice. Women of different orientation than heterosexual, very rarely report violence they experience, so it is most often unknown to the general public. Nearly 90% respondents know of cases of violence, and over 79% respondents know about cases of violence because they experienced it. All respondents that experienced violence experienced also emotional violence and 33% of the respondents experienced only this type of violence. All types of violence were experienced by 24% of respondents with physical violence as the predominant type, except for sexual, while all types of violence, with predominantly sexual violence were experienced by 9% respondents. Most often, the respondents experienced violence by individuals known to them – in 26% cases, and 43% of respondents experienced violence several times, randomly, with 3% of respondents who called the police.

The association Incest Trauma Centre is the only specialised organisation providing services and support to sexually abused children and victims of incest, with its data base on incest representing the only data base of its kind. The sample is based on an average of nine reported cases of sexual violence a week. The data mentioned represent averages in the given period (1994 – 2009) for regularly monitored parameters. The data are published on annual basis. These data show that, out of five sexually abused children, four are female and one is male. The age of the victim at first incident of sexual violence is on average eight years and one month. Perpetrators of sexual violence against children are predominantly men (in 92% cases), and most often the biological father (the most common form of incest is father-daughter), followed by stepfather, foster father, adoptive parent or person outside the family known to the child (family friend, neighbour, private teacher). In the period 1994-2004 in 2% cases the perpetrator was a person unknown to the child, and in the period 2005-2009 all 100% of perpetrators were individuals known to the child. The following violent sexual acts were used: obscene phone calls, exposure of normally covered body parts, voyeurism, fondling, taking pornographic photographs, attempt to perform sexual intercourse, rape, incest and child prostitution. Although most often the violence was performed against one child by one perpetrator, in 14% cases one child was abused by two or more perpetrators, one perpetrator abused two children in 7% cases, and in 12% cases three or more children. The data on the duration of violence are disturbing: in 29% cases the violence lasted for several months, and in 71% - several years (five years on average). The period between the first abuse incident and reporting was on average nine years and three months. Turning to authorities and institutions, before

coming to Incest Trauma Centre was recorded in 52% cases (violence victims turned to, according to frequency, CSWs, police, health institutions, prosecutor's office, etc).

According to data from the Counselling against Family Violence, by 2009 this association received 4,888 calls about violence against women and domestic violence. In the period between 2000 and 2010, 1,442 women and 1,329 children stayed in safe houses. On average, women spent 7.5 months in safe houses. According to their data, women stated economic dependence most often to be the reason of going back to the violator.

The publication *Women with Disabilities – Invisible Victims of Violence* of the organisation Out of Circle, gives data on cases of violence reported to this association, as well as case study on violence against women with disabilities. According to the data, Out of Circle received 5,520 calls between 1997 and 2008. The majority of calls (93%) were made by women with disabilities who were exposed to different forms of violence. The most frequent was verbal violence (28%), followed by economic (24%), physical (11%), forced isolation (22%) and sexual violence (6%). By types of disability, the most vulnerable women were those with intellectual disabilities – 48%, then cerebral paralysis – 32%, muscle dystrophy and neuromuscular diseases – 15% and women with combined disability – 5%. The reason for such a high number of abused women with disabilities lies in the fact that women with higher degrees of disabilities were physically dependant on others for help and support when performing basic living needs. Not only are they more vulnerable, but very often exposed to specific manner of abuse, which is reflected in denying help with self care, starving, removal of orthopaedic devices and means of communication, as well as threats of leaving them alone in the street without any help, that they would end in a home or psychiatric clinic, that they would live in complete isolation “if they are not obedient” and similar. The violators were in 87% cases men, most often family members that women with disabilities were completely dependent on.

5.4. Application of law, competencies and capacities of authorities and institutions

Situation analysis regarding violence against women should not only come down to presenting data on this phenomena, but also encompass the broader issue of the legal framework and government capacities to combat these forms of violence. Considering that violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship is in different ways and scope the subject of the Law on Social Protection, Family Law, Criminal Code and Law on Gender Equality, it is clear that centres for social work, police, courts, prosecutor offices, health institutions and gender equality and equal opportunity councils in the local self-government units, can be determined as the relevant national and local authorities and institutions for prevention and elimination of these forms of violence, that is, the authorities and institutions first in charge of application and implementation of these laws. The capacity of the above authorities and institutions for participation in the prevention and elimination of violence against women and domestic violence, as well as the real role they have in it, can be seen not only through normative analysis of competences or operations performed by these bodies in relation to these forms of violence, but also by analysing the ways in which data are collected and certain processes run, including the records and documentation on cases of violence, mutual cooperation in cases of violence, roles they have in adopting prevention measures and measures of support and protection for victims of violence, but also the issues of financial and human resources available to them, as well as training provided.

5.4.1. Data collection, services and processes

Considering there is no unique system for recording and documenting cases of domestic violence and violence against women in the Republic of Serbia, and each of the services registers cases differently, it is clear that such practice makes comparison and analyses difficult, but also that the situation observed based on the information they have about these forms of violence is not complete.

Having in mind the above, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has, through the Project Combating Sexual and Gender Based Violence, distributed questionnaires, collected and analysed data on services and capacities of centres for social work in 2009. This research included 139 CSWs in the Republic of Serbia. One research component was analysis of data collection and management. According to the Ministry's research, somewhat over one half of CSWs (53%) said they disaggregated data on domestic violence victims, and 47% of CSWs said they did not apply this methodology in keeping the records on beneficiaries. Around 40% (55) CSWs stated they kept records for disaggregation of data on perpetrators of domestic violence, while other CSWs did not practice this type of record keeping. It is important to note that all CSWs had in mind violence perpetrators against both adult and minor victims when answering that question. Sex structure in cases of domestic violence is an indicator monitored by the majority of CSWs (90 CSWs or 65%). Other data on violence victims and perpetrators are also recorded – data on age, recorded by 85 CSWs (or 61%), employment, recorded by 37 CSWs (or 27%), level of education, recorded by 35 CSWs (or 25%), as well as nationality, recorded by 31 CSW (22%). Only 24 CSWs (17%) state they have the possibility to keep data in electronic format, and 115 CSWs (83%) do not. A significant number of CSWs (over 35%) said they collected and filed data during their regular annual performance reporting, when they are required to submit a report to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in electronic format.

Current practice shows that predominant services provided by CSWs to domestic violence victims are: counselling services (89%), immediate interventions (91%), material support (89%), placement services, that is accommodation, which include taking the victim of violence out of the family and is provided by 109 CSWs (78%). Having in mind the above services, it is clear they could be improved to empower victims.

Out of the total number of CSWs that stated they placed victims of violence on the territory of their local self-government unit (79 CSWs), most of them (30 or nearly 43%) placed victims of violence in a different family, which is most often placement in the family of origin of the victim of violence or other relatives, but also with friends. Only 10 CSWs (14%) place victims of violence in a safe house, which indicates that this emergency intervention of temporary character is limited in reach.

During 2008, 93 CSWs or 67% of CSWs in the Republic of Serbia did not file criminal charges in cases of domestic violence, while 46 CSWs (33%) used this legal option. Such a high rate of CSWs that in 2008 did not file criminal charges for domestic violence does not indicate that there were no cases of domestic violence on the territories of these CSWs. In 2008, CSWs filed a total of 347 criminal charges in cases of domestic violence, out of which in 115 cases (33%) proceedings were initiated, in 139 (40%) cases the criminal charges were dismissed, while in 93 CSW cases the outcome of the filed criminal charges was unknown (27%). If we take into account that in 2008 CSWs recorded 4,554 adult violence victims and 3,158 violence victims in the category of children and youth, it is clear that CSWs did not use their legal authority and they had difficulties in assessing

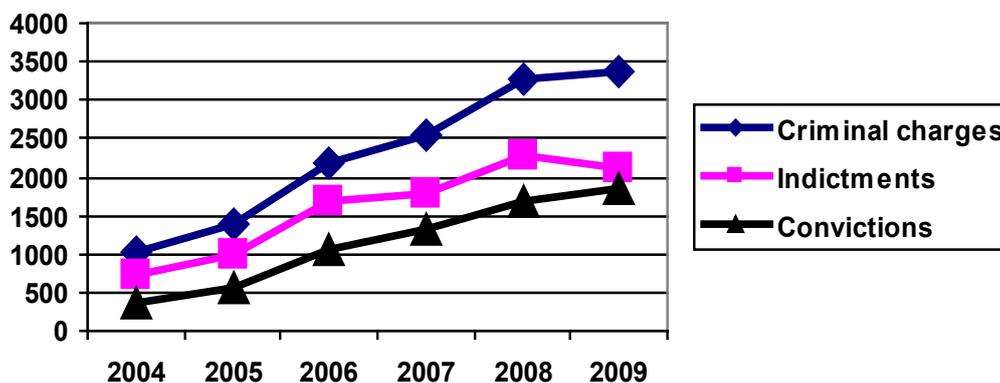
the grounds for filing criminal charges. This can be derived from the high percentage of dismissed criminal charges which can indicate also to inadequate treatment of charges in the prosecutor's office. Also, a high number of cases with unknown outcome of criminal charges filed by CSW could indicate that the proceedings were ongoing at the time of filling in the questionnaire, but not that there was no feedback from the prosecutor's office.

Furthermore, during 2008, 101 CSW (73%) did not start processes to issue measures of protection from domestic violence in accordance with the Family Law, whereas 38 CSWs (27%) used this option to protect the victims of violence. In 2008, CSWs started 136 court proceedings in total for issuing measures of protection from domestic violence.

Data collection and proceedings before judicial authorities require special attention.

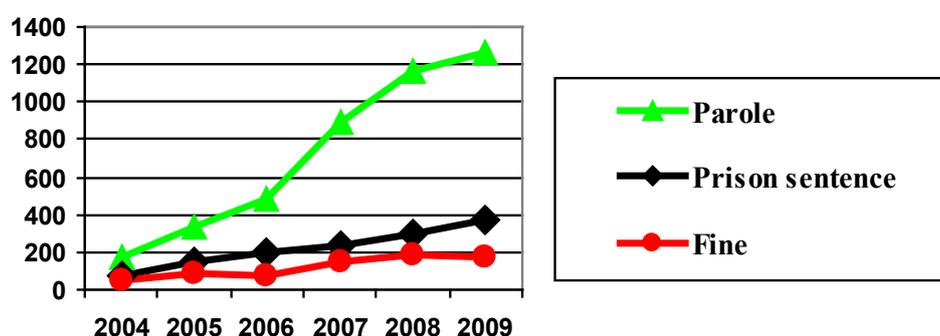
In the period between 2004 and 2006, in accordance with data available from the Republican Statistical Office judiciary statistics, there was a total of 4,597 criminal charges filed against adult suspects of domestic violence, and a total of 2,007 perpetrators were convicted (most convictions were suspended sentences). A total of 421 perpetrators were sentenced to time in prison. According to research conducted by the Association of Misdemeanour Judges of Serbia, and approximately in the same period (between 1 January 2004 and 31 July 2006) there were even 50,127 domestic violence events when police intervened, which indicates to a great difference between the total number of police interventions, number of criminal charges and convictions, especially prison sentences. The following charts are based on the judiciary statistical data developed by the Republican Statistical Office, indicating outcomes of criminal court proceedings against adult suspects in domestic violence.

Chart 1. Criminal charges, indictments and convictions for domestic violence (only for adult perpetrators)



Note: Data are based on total number of criminal charges, indictments and convictions during one year (because of the length of criminal proceedings it is difficult to monitor court cases on annual level – from indictment to conviction).

Chart 2. Convictions for criminal act of domestic violence (against adult perpetrators)



According to a research of judiciary practice in Belgrade and Nis, related to criminal act of domestic violence (the research included processed criminal acts of domestic violence in Article 194. of the Criminal Code; a total number of cases reviewed was 529: 280 from municipal public prosecutor's offices in Belgrade, 50 from Municipal Public Prosecutor in Nis, 140 court cases in Belgrade and 59 cases of the Nis Municipal Court. The research was conducted in all Belgrade courts and prosecutor's offices, which made the sample of cases, correspond to randomly formed representative sample of cases. The research covered the period between January 2006 and May 2007. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Also, researchers directly and continuously monitored court trials in a total of nine cases, out of which four in Belgrade and five in Nis), CSW criminal charges made up 2% of the total number of charges filed.

Criminal charges were most often filed by authorised officers of the internal affairs (78%) and the plaintiff (13%), while in 7% cases there were no information on the plaintiff. The indictment or request for investigation was raised by the prosecutor in 72% cases. The proceedings were suspended either because the public prosecutor had given up or the criminal charges were dismissed in 29% cases. The proceedings before the public prosecutor's office in the majority of cases was efficient because the time between the filing of criminal charges and the request for investigation to the investigating judge did not last longer than one month. The time between filing criminal charges and indictment (in cases when there was no motion for investigation, but maybe proposal to undertake some investigative actions) was longer – three to five months. However, between the filing of criminal charges and the decision on dismissal of the charges or the decision of the public prosecutor to abandon further prosecution, the proceedings lasted even longer than 12 months. Other analyses performed by the Association of Public Prosecutors and Deputy Public Prosecutors, give the following main shortcomings in the work of the public prosecutor's office in relation to the criminal act of domestic violence: rare proposals of legal measures for protection from domestic violence, rare proposals for protective custody institute pursuant to the Criminal Code (the reason of rare proposals for protective custody measure is that it can only be instituted on the defendant who was given a suspended sentence) and a lack in the application of opportunity, that is, conditional delay in prosecution, which is in theory considered justified if accompanied by alcohol or drug rehabilitation or psychotherapy.

The period between the time when the act is committed until the main hearing is scheduled gives to a certain extent a picture on how the courts work when it comes to domestic violence. According to data from the above research of legal practices regarding the crime of domestic violence, in a very low number of cases the main hearing was scheduled in under one month or between one and three months, and in a much higher number of cases the main hearing was scheduled in seven months from the date when the violence occurred and the charges were filed, which is a very long period of time in cases of domestic violence. Also, it is obvious that the court action was not efficient, since among the cases where decisions were brought, the majority lasted between seven and ten months or longer than one year. Based on this it can be concluded that the least efficient part in processing the crimes of domestic violence is actually the court proceedings. The court proceedings were largely slowed down by the delay of main hearing, which was justified by the court using different reasons. Most often the reason for delay was that the defendant did not appear. Otherwise, one of the key problems faced by the public prosecutor during the proceedings was related to the behaviour of the plaintiffs, who in a number of cases refused to join the criminal prosecution, refused to testify or changed prior testimonies. It is noticeable that the plaintiffs who did not join the prosecution avoided the summons and did not appear at the main hearing, which is an additional reason of the lagging of the proceedings. In a number of cases the plaintiffs called on their right not to testify before the court. Some of the reasons why victims of violence refuse to join criminal prosecution and use their legal right to testify are that there is no adequate system of psycho-social assistance to victims of violence, because of which they can be exposed to secondary victimisation. Furthermore, the above research showed that the court, when measuring the type and level of the punishment, did not as a rule take into account all relevant circumstances. The sentences given to the perpetrators of domestic violence indicate a tendency of mild punishment: the majority of the sentences issued were fines and suspended sentences, while the majority of effective prison sentences were set at the legal minimum of duration.

In some cases domestic violence is not determined in the proceedings, but violations of the law and order can come with elements of domestic violence when certain misdemeanours occur between family members, such as quarrelling or yelling, threats of assault on life or body of a person, or life or body of a person close to them, insult, provoking a fight, participation in a fight, violence against someone, etc. The Association of Misdemeanour Judges of Serbia carried out a research on misdemeanours that contained elements of domestic violence in Serbia in 2004. Although the research mostly focused on the act and information on perpetrator, victim of violence, type of violence, some indicators show certain elements of the misdemeanour court proceedings. According to the results of this research, the total number of cases received in 2004 in misdemeanour councils was 1,046,305, out of which 60,746 related to violation of law and order, and the number of cases with elements of domestic violence that were irrevocably ended was 7,080 or 12%. This research also contains data on police interventions, which show that a warning issued to the perpetrator is most often the result of interventions.

Table. Number and results of police intervention in cases of domestic violence in the period between 2004 and 2006

	2004	2005	First six months in 2006
Police interventions in cases of domestic violence:	19,306	20,732	10,089
Warning	12,226	13,224	6,274
Misdemeanour charge	6,233	6,594	3,067
Criminal charge	1,131	1,501	837

There are great differences between the total number of police interventions, recorded cases of violence in CSWs, number of filed criminal charges and persons convicted, especially to sentence in prison.

5.4.2. Cooperation in resolving cases of violence

Multisectoral approach in resolving the issues of violence is recommended in numerous international documents.

According to data available, centres for social work have the practice of sharing data on domestic violence with other organisations. According to the results of the above mentioned research, 88% of surveyed CSWs have the practice of sharing information with other organisations in the local self-government, and 12% do not share data with others. However, as already pointed out, regarding certain information (e.g. the result of criminal charges) there is no feedback. The speed of data exchange, which greatly influences the quality of cooperation and protection of violence victims, varies among CSWs. 34% of CSWs have ongoing exchange of information on domestic violence with other organisations. Considering that 54% only occasionally exchange information with others, actual cooperation between different stakeholders regarding the elimination and prevention of domestic violence and violence against women – is inadequate. CSWs are institutionally, in terms of procedure and response, most closely connected with the police, and exchange the most information with them. All CSWs in Serbia (139) exchange information with the police, 110 of 139 CSWs (79%) have cooperation with the prosecutor's office, 112 CSWs (around 81%) with judicial authorities, while 117 CSWs or 84% exchange information with educational institutions. Around 82% CSWs (114) said they exchanged information with CSOs. 96 CSWs (69%) exchange information on domestic violence with other CSWs.

To illustrate, the report analysis on CSWs stated that in 2008 and 2009 the majority of the cases of violence reported to CSWs were reported by the police.

Table. Structure of reported cases according to the way in which domestic violence was discovered (2008-2009)

Way of discovery	Number of families	
	2008	2009
Police report	1,908	1,924
Family member report	1,791	1,681
Court order	517	478
Institutional report (school, health centre, nursery, etc)	360	296
Report by someone outside the family	341	338
Custodian body by official duty	258	274
CSO report	30	28
Total number of families	5,205	5,019

Lack of cooperation is one of the major issues in protecting the victims of violence, which was also indicated in the Ombudsman's 2009 Annual Report, noting that there were serious gaps in exchange of information between relevant authorities and services in the area of domestic violence, especially between the centres for social work, police and health services. It should also be pointed out that the Ombudsman, out of a total of 30 proceedings in the area of gender equality started on own initiative, in 29 of the cases they were started because of domestic violence, and severe cases – when violence resulted in the murder of a partner, or severe injuries, and the perpetrator committed suicide or attempted to commit suicide. With this aim cooperation should be established because this is very important for the prevention of femicide.

The picture of actual (lack of) cooperation between relevant authorities and institutions is also given in the fact that even with competencies defined, there are no clear forms of cooperation, or the scope of individual and coordinated intervention. Practice of shifting responsibilities from one service to the next was noted.

According to research findings, there are no mechanisms for levelling prosecutor offices' and courts' attitudes towards certain elements of domestic violence, nor is there uniformity achieved within the judiciary. In order to achieve the necessary degree of levelling, appropriate legal instruments should be used to level legal practice, such as mandatory guidelines, general attitudes, etc.

5.4.3. Measures of prevention, protection and support for victims of violence

During the past years the number of public campaigns against domestic violence has increased significantly. These campaigns were carried out by CSOs, although the national and provincial gender equality bodies and other stakeholders have recently joined in the organisation of conferences, campaigns, publishing posters and other informational material and similar. The majority of these activities are carried out within the international campaign "16 days of activism against gender violence". Also, campaigns and other activities related to prevention on the local level are often organised, with increasingly active participation of local gender equality bodies. These campaigns are still not implemented in all local environments, nor do they include all target groups. Activities focused on public awareness raising are numerous, but they should be carried out regularly throughout the year in order to reach all citizens.

So far a comprehensive overview of available services and ways to access the rights to

protection from domestic violence and other forms of gender based violence. The following data come from research focusing on the issue of implementation of measures for protection from domestic violence (according to the Family Law) in judicial practice.

The research of legal protection from domestic violence in court practice in Belgrade included records of court cases containing suits for protection against domestic violence under the Family Law, as well as records of court cases containing divorce suits in which, in addition to request for divorce, there is a motion to issue measure of protection from domestic violence. The total number of municipal court cases in Belgrade reviewed was 104, 19 from the First Municipal Court, 20 cases from the Second Municipal Court, 20 cases from the Third Municipal Court, 21 from the Fourth Municipal Court and 24 cases from the Fifth Municipal Court. The research included the period between second half of 2006 and first half of 2008. The analysis of the content of court decisions shows that in the majority of cases the court brought a meritory decision, while in 4% cases the suit was dismissed, or the suit was considered withdrawn (32%). In 44% cases the court accepted in full the motion for the verdict, having set all the protective measures requested by the plaintiff while in 9% cases the prosecution's demand was partially accepted and only some of the requested measures were ordered. In 6% cases the court rejected the prosecution demand, and in as many cases the court, alongside the measures requested, set also a measure the plaintiff did not request. Regarding measures of protection ordered by the court, in the examined sample most often the measure ordered was prohibit of further harassment (44%), fewer orders to remove the accused from the joint flat or house (18%), whereas restraining order was issued in 23% cases. Regarding the period of time to which the measure is set, in the majority of suits where protective measures were ordered, the court decided on the duration of one year. When deciding on measures, the court normally keeps within the limits of the prosecution request, although it is not bound by it and a measure of protection can be ordered that the plaintiff did not request. According to the data from the cases analysed, the proceedings last a relatively long time. Postponed discussion hearings were a relatively common phenomenon in the cases included in the research and there was also an extremely high percentage of cases when the suit was withdrawn (40%). The reason to withdraw the suit which is sometimes stated is the promise of the accused not to commit any more violence, that is the statement of the plaintiff, or the prosecutor that harmonious relations have been established between the parties. In some of the analysed cases the withdrawal of the suit has come to after talking to the parties in the CSW. There are also cases which contain notification from the CSW saying that "the plaintiff revokes the suit after having resolved important matters with the spouse". In the majority of cases CSWs were in favour of the requested protection measures, considering them to be appropriate or even necessary, but the formal correspondence from the CSWs to the court giving (on the court's order) their expert opinion on the appropriateness of the protection measures, were very different because the centre for social work mainly spoke only of the appropriateness of the ordered measures, while rarely the expert opinion in the correspondence would be explained (e.g. CSW rarely give expert assessment of risk from repeated violence). It was also determined that plaintiffs very rarely used the legal option to request temporary measures in the cases for protection from domestic violence, but the fact that in the majority of cases where the request for temporary measures was issued (in 12 cases) the court granted this request (in eight cases) is encouraging. It should be noted that measures, as a rule, related to the manner of execution of parental right (entrusting the keeping and education of children, as well as the issue of supporting children). It is important to stress that 70% of plaintiffs looked for assistance from relevant authorities

and services before initiating the case for protection from domestic violence (26% turned to CSW, 18% to health institutions, 8% turned to the police, and 16% asked CSOs for assistance). For 30% of plaintiffs there are no data on the records on having turned to relevant authorities and services previously.

According to the CSW functional analysis in 2009 (Republic Institute for Social Protection, Report Analysis on Centres for Social Work in Serbia), the structure of ordered measures of protection from domestic violence are dominated by restraining orders (307) and prohibits of harassment (258). The total number of protection measures (presented in the table below) also include measures ordered in the situations of partner violence and measures of protection of abused children. The total number of perpetrators that have been ordered one or more measures of protection from domestic violence in 2009 was 151.

*Table. Number and structure of court measures of protection
against family violence issued in 2009*

Type of issued court measure	Number of measures
Restraining order from the family member on a certain distance	307
Prohibit of further harassment of the family member	258
Restraining order from the living or working place	151
Issuing warrants for removal from the flat or house	95
Issuing warrants for moving into the family flat or house	12
Total number of ordered measures	823

More adequate and consistent application of protection measures reduces the need for placement in safe houses. Also, in relation to protection measures, it is important to resolve the problem of lack of free legal aid services, which are not available everywhere.

5.4.4. Education and capacities

Professionals working with domestic violence daily do not receive in the course of formal education any knowledge on domestic violence, nor are they obliged to undergo training in this area. The problems of violence against women and domestic violence is not part of the curriculum and university or high school programmes, whereas an insufficient number of employees have undergone additional professional training in the area of violence against women and domestic violence.

In the research dedicated to mapping of CSW services for victims of domestic violence, out of a total of 139 CSWs included in the research, 49 CSWs (35%) stated that some of their employees had undergone different types of training, education, or training programmes, or they attended workshops on gender equality or domestic violence. Similar results can be found also in the data of independent bodies and civil society. For example, according to the data of the Provincial Ombudsman in 2007, 76% representatives of the teams combating domestic violence on the territory of AP Vojvodina had not undergone any training, and according to the data of the Women's Active Society, based on the questionnaire applied on 97 experts from Novi Sad employed in CSW, police and courts, even 65% had not been to any seminars or training on domestic violence.

Professional development of experts is most often included in project activities funded by international donors or with financial support of national, provincial or local autho-

rities. An overview of available training programmes does not exist, and a comprehensive analysis that would identify training content and assess its quality has never been made. The information on domestic violence and other forms of gender based violence are not included in the regular educational programmes starting with pre-school and ending with university. In some of the regular schools, the elective subject of civil education contains some information about domestic violence.

There are no comprehensive studies on human and financial resource capacities of authorities and institutions combating these forms of violence. In CSWs, the majority of employees have completed higher education: 1,384 (54%), and half as many further education (26%). The total number of professionals (in terms of the Codes of Practice for the Centres for Social Work, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 59/08 and 37/10), “professional” denotes an expert who is engaged in CSW operations, management and legal affairs, and planning and development activities) in CSWs is 1,836 or 69% of the total number of employees in all 139 CSWs (2,630 employees). According to CSW records, in 2008 there were a total of 516,907 service beneficiaries, meaning that one expert on average worked with 281.5 beneficiaries during 2008.

In this research, 17 CSWs (or 12%) reported their employees attended some specialist, master or other academic programmes for professional development and raising their capacities. The majority of the investigated CSWs stated their employees needed additional training in the area of gender equality, that is, gender based violence. The need for additional training on gender equality was expressed by 113 CSWs (81%), and education on gender based violence is considered grounded in 118 CSWs (85%). The need for specific training on domestic violence was expressed by 111 (CSWs, or 80%).

6. Strategic goals

The strategic areas and strategic goals are defined in accordance with international recommendations and situation analysis in Serbia, and developed through the following four balanced areas:

- 1) Prevention (Outcome: Establish a system of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention)
- 2) Normative framework (Outcome: Improve normative framework for protection of women from violence)
- 3) Multisectoral cooperation and capacity building of authorities and specialised services (Outcome: Improve multisectoral cooperation and raise capacities of authorities and services)
- 4) Protection and support system for victims (Outcome: Improve the system of protection and support for victims of violence)

The findings of research to date indicate the need to design and implement violence prevention measures, which includes more frequent and comprehensive implementation of campaigns aimed at encouraging victims of violence to report cases of violence and inform the victims about their legal rights simultaneously improving efficiency and timeliness of institutional measures for protection of the victims of violence. In addition to organisation of public awareness raising campaigns, it is necessary to develop and implement other extensive measures of prevention of all forms of violence against women, because research data show that violence has serious and long-term consequences, such as:

- a) threat to mental and physical health of women – victims of violence
- b) high degree of indirect and direct victimisation of children (children are often present in events of violence against their mothers or they are the victims of violent fathers)

c) cause of effects to “next generations” – research confirmed that girls who were witnesses of violent behaviour of their fathers towards their mothers are more often exposed to the risk of becoming victims of violence by their partners as adults, while boys – victims of violence in the primary family, are more inclined to violence towards their partners at a later stage. In order to prevent generational violence, as well as with the aim to prevent repetition of violent behaviour, it is necessary to develop programmes for perpetrators and train authorities and services staff to apply them adequately, with evaluation and assessment of the effects of such programmes, having in mind the lack of experience in implementing programmes for perpetrators in Serbia.

In accordance with the CEDAW Concluding Comments, as well as the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General in-depth study on violence against women (2006) and UN Statistical Committee that proposed a list of temporary international indicators to measure the extent of violence against women (UN has taken important steps towards creating unique international indicators for measuring the extent of violence against women, to be implemented in UN member states; in Resolution 61/143 on Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, UN General Assembly asked the UN Statistical Commission to develop a set of temporary international indicators; these indicators were adopted at the 40th Session of the UN Statistical Commission, held in February 2009), periodical research is needed on the extent of all forms of violence against women to inform policy on prevention and elimination of domestic violence. Research on domestic violence including nationally representative samples of women are needed so the findings can be applied to the general population of women in Serbia. Such research, as well as systemic solutions in the sphere of recording cases of violence, data collection on violence victims and perpetrators, represent solid basis to develop proposals to amend legislation regulating this area.

According to research data, an insufficient percentage of the total number of cases of violence reported to relevant authorities and services reach a court epilogue. Therefore, more efficient enforcement of the law is needed. Also, since research indicates that women are in danger of former partners, the normative framework should be improved to enable harmonisation of the protected circle in criminal and family legislation.

In analysing enforcement of existing legislation, it should be taken into account that research has shown that weapons or tools are used in a number of violent incidents in the family.

Research indicate that domestic violence victims who have turned to relevant authorities and services perceive the lack of coordinated action and cooperation as the problem in providing institutional response to the violence committed, which is why the victims of violence are not satisfied with the services provided.

It is necessary to establish a systematic institutional cooperation and create basis for provision of unique services. Capacity building of relevant authorities and services needs to begin with establishment of further specialised training of employees. When improving institutional protection and organisation of training for employees, it is important to pay special attention to the needs of Roma women, women with disabilities and other vulnerable categories of women and work on establishing their trust in the system.

In order to protect victims of violence efficiently, it is necessary to improve and develop further services of emergency and long-term protection for victims of violence by establishing crisis centres, forming mobile teams, introducing a unique SOS number for women and children victims of violence, etc.

Data also indicate the need for long term measures of support to victims of violence, such as economic empowering, considering that one of the most common reasons why they stay in violent communities is their economic dependence from the partner.

Strategic Area One: Prevention

Outcome: Establish a system of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention

Prevention of violence against women is the key priority in combating violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship. Having in mind that violence generates serious economic effects, prevention programmes must be developed and included in the structures of the national social, health and legal protection systems. Prevention can be developed on three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. According to the World Health Organisation, primary prevention includes all activities with the aim to prevent violence, secondary prevention includes response to and limiting harmful effects of violence immediately after the violence has occurred with the aim to limit effects, while tertiary prevention includes long-term treatment, as well as support to victims of violence in order to prevent further harmful effects and reoccurrence of violence.

These three levels of prevention are determined by the efficiency of their implementation in terms of whether the measures for prevention of violence are implemented before the violence occurs, immediately after the violence has been perpetrated, or on long-term basis. Such division is traditionally applied in the health care sector, but it is considered that secondary and tertiary prevention are also relevant in working with persons who have experienced violence, as well as in working with perpetrators, so they can be applied in other sectors, such as the sector of family and legal protection. Considering that prevention in this strategic area is understood according to World Health Organisation definition, strategic goals that relate to particular and general prevention in a legal sense are included in the section dedicated to normative framework.

Objectives:

1. Society that publicly condemns violence as crime established, by promoting non-violent behaviour, gender equality and combating discrimination

Violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship is still on the public margins and is not treated as a general social problem. In order to ensure adequate political and social environment in a systematic struggle against violence, it is necessary to raise public awareness by promoting non-violent behaviour, gender equality and antidiscrimination. The first objective is focused on primary prevention, with the choice of universal type of intervention, i.e. intervention addressing a broad target group, general population, regardless of the individual risk of exposure to violence. The aim is to change existing social patterns, which create the environment where violence is adopted as a model of behaviour, providing a favourable climate for its occurrence – it is manifested when there is a lack of social condemnation.

Activities:

1.1. Public awareness raising

1.1.1. Support and finance public actions and campaigns against violence against women in the family and other forms of gender based violence, promote non-violent culture locally, regionally and nationally.

1.1.2. Initiate and encourage direct participation of professionals from all relevant public services and the civil sector in public awareness raising activities on the issues of domestic violence and violence against women.

1.1.3. Print and distribute different publications: brochures, manuals and information sheets aimed at preventing violence and protection of victims of violence in Serbian and languages of national minorities.

1.2. Activities directed at decision makers

1.2.1. Organise, or support the organisation of public forums, conferences, lectures on the issue of violence against women.

1.3. Ensure active role of the media

1.3.1. Organise training for journalists and editors on gender equality and violence against women.

1.3.2. Improve normative framework for accountable reporting on violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship.

1.3.3. Encourage the media to realise thematic shows, coverage and ongoing media activities for prevention of violence, and actively support actions and campaigns for raising public awareness on expansion, causes and effects of violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship.

1.3.4. Consider options for public broadcasting service to report to authorities on the ways of promoting gender equality.

1.3.5. Introduce specialised training programmes for journalists, editors, employees in media.

1.3.6. Encourage regular annual awards for journalists and media for special contribution in the area of awareness raising on unacceptability of gender based violence.

1.4. Change stereotypes in understanding gender roles

1.4.1. Develop programmes for preventive work with men with the aim to examine stereotypical understanding of gender roles. Preventive programmes for men need to be designed to change the perception of the roles that men have in continuing violent behaviour patterns, putting focus on the fact that violent behaviour and accepting violence is the result of social and cultural clichés, definition of masculinity and stereotypical understanding of gender roles. Preventive programmes with women should redefine the role of women in the society and change the understanding of “accepting and enduring” violence, which are the results of gender socialisation and cultural stereotypes.

1.5. Working with children and youth in educational institutions

1.5.1. Educational work with children and youth, on all levels of education and upbringing, introducing content related to prevention of violence against women, which is supposed to be developed through application of different curricular content and extra-curricular programmes with the aim:

- 1) to promote non-violent behaviour and promote alternatives
- 2) implement special programmes for young people who have been victims of violence or are threatened with violence
- 3) implement programmes in which young people participate as activists and peer educators.

A part of preventive activities with young people should have special focus on reconsidering traditional understanding of gender roles and promote gender equality.

1.5.2. Improving and expanding sexual education content by applying curricular plans and programmes for senior primary school and high school students so that they also include programmes on intimate partner relationships and gender equality.

1.5.3. Introduce programmes on human rights, children’s rights and gender equality on all levels of educational work, expanding programmes existing within the civil education, constitution and rights of citizen subjects, as well as extracurricular project activities in schools.

1.5.4. Information sharing from adopted protocols for protecting children from abuse and neglect (information related to social and health protection systems in cases of violence in educational institutions, as well as specific information on individuals and organisations that offer assistance in cases of violence).

1.5.5. Preparation of students (peer educators and mediators) for realisation and development of preventive programmes for youth, which promote the culture of non-violence and the programme of the pedagogue assistant related to the activities of cooperation with the local self-government and families of children and students, especially Roma communities and families, introduce implementation of preventive programmes in the area prevention of domestic violence against women.

1.6. Encourage active role of the local self-government units

1.6.1. Encourage the role of the local self-government and local gender equality councils as active promoters in combating violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship.

1.6.2. Encourage development, promotion and implementation of local action plans to combat violence against women.

1.6.3. Recommend to local self-governments introducing specialised services for the victims of violence in the local social service systems, which are funded from the local self-government unit budgets.

**2. Improve institutional response immediately
after the committed violence with focus on the needs of the individuals
against whom violence has been committed**

The system of protection of violence victims has a twofold role. On one hand, readiness to urgently react immediately after the violence has been committed must be demonstrated, while on the other the capacity for long-term planning and acting on the prevention of violence and the protection of rights of the victims of violence must exist. Objective Two falls within the domain of secondary prevention representing a form of special intervention targeting individuals under high risk of exposure to violence.

Activities:

2.1. Training for staff in relevant authorities and services

2.1.1. Develop training programmes for relevant authorities and services, such as human resource service, Judicial Academy, Police Academy, CSWs, primary and secondary healthcare institutions, etc. Increase level of awareness among professionals about domestic violence, knowledge of international documents and standards and working principles in the area, and systematically work on overcoming prejudice, misbeliefs and stereotypes. Ensure ongoing education of the staff, both during their undergraduate studies, and during their professional advancement, as well as through implementation of accredited educational programmes aimed at identifying and understanding domestic violence.

2.1.2. Professional advancement and education in the area of education and other relevant systems (social protection, health, police, prosecutor's office, judiciary) by accrediting programmes and applying existing programmes. Professional advancement of teachers in primary and high schools to work on health education with youth on the national and local level.

2.2. Empower women

2.2.1. Knowledge of rights. Empowering women should include awareness raising about gender based violence being unacceptable, presenting a serious breach of human rights and of existing mechanisms for help. Awareness raising among women gains a special form of providing support and protection to women who belong to vulnerable categories, such as rural women, lesbians, Roma women, women with low level of education, women with disabilities, migrant women or refugees. Legal literacy presents a special form of assistance aimed at providing information to women about legislation in order to improve their knowledge and understanding on the approaches to the justice system for protection of personal rights.

2.2.2. Introduce programmes of economic empowerment of women aimed at employment and self-employment.

3. Prevention of repeated violence

If there is no systematic action against violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship, a high number of cases of violence reoccur. In order to systematically approach combating violence, the prevention of violence should continuously be worked on, not only when it appears. Objective Three is in the domain of tertiary prevention and it relates to long-term support and assistance after exposure to violence, through implementation of programmes to empower the victims of violence and deals in overcoming trauma and reducing long-term negative consequences to the victim of violence. The measures included in this objective target on one hand the individuals that have suffered violence, and on the other hand measures should relate to the perpetrators of violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship.

Activities:

3.1. Regular research in violence, its causes and effects

3.1.1. Organise and carry out research on violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship on representative samples nationally, respecting ethical standards, focusing on issues of functioning of social protection, health care and legal systems, ensuring informing the public and decision makers on the extent and characteristics of violence, which provide grounds to identify, implement and evaluate measures for combating violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship.

3.2. Define indicators for monitoring violence

3.2.1. Develop indicators for monitoring violence within relevant authorities and services

3.3. Empowering victims of violence

3.3.1. Establish mechanisms for long-term support to women who have experienced violence.

3.3.2. Consider the possibility to establish mechanisms for funding the programmes of economic empowerment aimed at women.

3.4. Working with violence perpetrators

3.4.1. Provide conditions to implement programmes for perpetrators within the social protection system. These programmes for perpetrators should not be an alternative for punishment and safety measures the perpetrators get for the committed act of domestic violence and for other criminal acts that constitute violence against women.

It is necessary to establish special programmes for perpetrators and pilot them in their initial phases. These programmes should be available also for individuals ready to apply for them preventively and voluntarily.

The programmes for men – perpetrators of violence should be based on the following assumptions:

1) Primary goal is to ensure safety of violence victims and this is the basic guiding principle for both programme leaders and for the participants.

2) Cooperation with services providing support to women and intervention programmes.

3) Theoretical approach should include the gender aspect of this form of violence and sole responsibility of the perpetrator. Also, the following aspects need to be included: gender theories, violence definitions and types of abuse, origin of violence, theory of intervention, or change.

4) Focus on important factors in the use of violence (socio-cultural, relational and individual factors) and aspects of personality (knowledge, emotions and behaviour).

These programmes need to include key principles and steps in working with perpetrators, such as:

1) It is necessary to examine risks to the victim of violence; woman – victim of violence is in no way obligated to participate in these programmes; her safety should be taken into account at all times.

2) Children living in the family where there is violence are always directly or indirectly victims of violence and programmes for perpetrators need to include child protection.

3) Approach and attitudes in working directly with perpetrators shall be based on the belief that they can change, that using violence is a choice.

4) Risk analysis is one of the key factors in decision making on the programmes; cooperation with women – victims of violence in assessing adequacy of this type of treatment and its effects is necessary.

5) Staff implementing these programmes needs to be qualified for it.

6) Quality of the programme must be assured (accreditation), records kept, files, monitoring and evaluation of their effects implemented.

Implementers:

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Information and Information Society, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development.

Partners:

National Employment Service, Judicial Academy, media, journalist associations, local authorities, CSOs.

Deadline: ongoing.

Strategic Area Two: Normative Framework

Outcome: Improve normative framework for protection of women from violence

Improving the normative framework for the protection of women from violence needs to contribute to effective prevention and elimination of violence against women in the family and intimate partner relationship. Improving the normative framework, in accordance with this Strategy, as well as the Concluding Comments of the UN CEDAW Committee on Serbia preliminary report, includes:

- 1) consolidating and harmonising relevant solutions contained in appropriate legislation, primarily the Criminal Code and Family Law;
- 2) revision and introduction of new solutions enabling effective action and cooperation between relevant authorities and services and providing effective protection for victims of violence.

Objectives:

1. Consolidate and improve legislation

Certain legal provisions relevant for the prevention of violence against women in the family and intimate partner relations are not harmonised between one another, which reduces normative framework quality. Having in mind this fact, the Committee for Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its Concluding Comments on the implementation of the CEDAW Convention in the Republic of Serbia (2007) recommended the government to consider harmonising relevant provisions within different laws – in order to ensure adequate legal framework for effective prevention and elimination of violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship.

Activities:

1.1. Consolidate relevant provisions of the criminal and family legislature

1.1.1. Amend material and process criminal legislation to improve the system of legal protection from violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship.

Work on harmonisation with relevant international documents and legal solutions related to criminal prosecution of perpetrators of violence in emotional and sexual relationship; define rape and criminal prosecution of marital rape and sexual act with helpless person or person with disability. It is necessary to continuously monitor penal policy and dismissed criminal charges which would provide situation analysis and monitoring in the area. It is necessary to consider the possibilities and effects of extending security measures related to prohibit of approaching or communicating with the victim of violence and prohibit of harassment and persecution, because today harassment and persecution are possible without approaching the victim of violence or communicating with them.

1.1.2. The criminal process legislation requires certain amendments that would ensure protection of the victims of violence from secondary victimisation and further trauma. In this regard, it is necessary to consider the possibility of proscribing special rules for interviewing particularly vulnerable injured parties and witnesses and similar; possibility to prohibit confrontation of victims of sexual and gender based violence with the defendant; possibility of audio and video testimony for the victim of violence, which would be used during the criminal proceeding, or enable the victim of violence to testify through video conference; have a person of trust (relative, friend, CSO representative) of the victim's choice present together with the expert, who would give direct support to the victim of violence. It is necessary to develop court services for witnesses and provide space for the victims to await trials in. It is necessary to review the rules on prescription of legal action for sex offences committed against minors; consider the possibility of using a conviction in criminal proceedings in cases of sexual, domestic and other forms of violence to decide on the compensation of damages to the victim of violence in order to prevent further victimisation of the victim of violence; the possibility for the court to order electronic surveillance on second offender in a period of time, etc.

1.1.3. The following needs to be reviewed in the family legislation:

1) deadlines for temporary measures of protection from domestic violence in cases of acute violence, when physical or psychological integrity of the violence victim is threatened to the extent where it is a threat to her life or health

2) active legitimation to institute proceedings

3) possibility for the court itself to institute certain court proceedings ex officio

4) introduce new measures of protection from domestic violence, such as mandatory alcoholism and other addictions treatment and mandatory psychological counselling or treatment for violence perpetrator, including measures aimed at financial assistance to the victim of violence.

Implementers:

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science.

Deadline: end 2012.

**Strategic Area Three: Multisectoral cooperation and capacity building
of authorities and specialised services**

Outcome Improve multisectoral cooperation and raise capacities of authorities
and services

In order to establish an efficient system for protection of women victims of violence it is necessary to establish ongoing multisectoral cooperation between the protection system stakeholders. This includes cooperation between centres for social work, police, prosecutor's offices, courts and health institutions, which need to have adequate working conditions.

It is necessary to include CSOs in the system of protection, in accordance with the Law on Social Protection.

Objectives:

1. Establish mechanisms of coordination for protection of the victims of violence and include CSOs in coordination mechanisms

Activities:

1.1. Adopt the General protocol of cooperation between institutions, authorities and organisations in situations of violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship, starting with the following competencies as defined by law:

- 1) police
- 2) centres for social work
- 3) public prosecutor's office
- 4) health institutions
- 5) educational institutions
- 6) civil society organisations
- 7) general and special courts

The general protocol needs to fully and comprehensively ensure that each authority and each institution acts in accordance with their legal competencies and responsibilities, effectively and integrally in order to provide long-term and sustainable protection to the women victims of partner violence, or domestic violence and provide conditions to impose adequate sanctions on the violator, or other measures that should help to change the violator's values and their return to socially acceptable behaviour.

1.2. Develop and adopt special protocols for dealing with cases of violence against women for each department with competencies in the protection of victims and elimination of domestic violence

In order to achieve efficient intersectoral cooperation the ministries responsible for the activities of elimination and protection from violence should:

- 1) develop special protocols of internal procedure for each system in accordance with the main principles and aims of the General Protocol;
- 2) within their jurisdiction recommend to institutions and other organisations to develop more detailed procedures of their own for better protection from violence;
- 3) encourage systematic training of employees in protocol implementation;

4) encourage signing of MoUs on the local level between institutions and other organisations whose cooperation is necessary for efficient realisation and implementation of the protection for victims of violence.

1.3. Encourage introduction of continuous coordination practice between relevant authorities and services on the level of the local self-government for prevention of violence against women

1.3.1. Support networking between all relevant authorities and services for prevention of violence against women and civil society organisations on the level of local self government.

1.3.2. Support the development of programmes for prevention and repression of violence against women and define concrete tasks and forms of cooperation.

1.3.3. Promote mechanisms for coordination and consultation with the civil society sector, especially the organisations providing services for protection of women victims of violence in the family and in intimate partner relationship. Specialised organisations, especially those that are licensed to provide services, should be a part of the coordination at the local level. In this respect, regular consultative meetings should be organised with the representatives of organisations providing services to violence victims and develop clear and public procedures regulating cooperation, following on existing mechanisms, such as the Forum for Dialogue with CSOs.

2. Consider and propose the introduction of a unique software system to record cases of violence against women, providing data on the following:

1) the number of reported incidents of violence and to which services (this base would refer to the cases of violence reported to relevant services, thus not providing data on prevalence of domestic violence in the general population which can be obtained through periodical research, e.g. every five years);

2) the characteristics of participants and events;

3) the characteristics of actions (activities, measures and services provided)

This data base should monitor:

1) operational efficiency of the service – information gathered enable monitoring efficiency and effectiveness of interventions by individual services;

2) monitoring and oversight in relation to each reported case of violence in the domestic context, which should include possibility to:

- follow the case, i.e. the victim from beginning to the end of the process;
- coordinate the flow of information between the services approached, or those that take action;
- oversee if staff implements procedures guaranteed by law or by-laws (protocols on action and protocols on intersectoral cooperation)

3) how policies in the area of prevention and protection of women from violence are made, as well as the monitoring of effects of the adopted policies and measures.

Registering cases of domestic violence in this way prevents “multiple count of the same cases”, which contributes to establishing the right number of reported cases for the given period of time (regardless to where the report or identification was made). Also, records enable data on all the services that the person exposed to violence has turned to (in which period of time), what the link is between the number of reports and types of intervention (especially from the domain of police and judicial interventions), as well as if the case is ongoing (and in which aspect) or if it has been finalised.

Services included: records include data that would be collected and recorded in the police, public prosecutor's office, courts (misdemeanour, criminal, civil), centres for social work, health institutions (not specified) and specialised services for support to victims of violence (not specified).

Activities:

1.2.1. Test proposals and discussions on solutions (at least six municipalities in Serbia in the first year of implementation).

1.2.2. Develop software for electronic data input and processing.

1.2.3. Harmonise concept idea with the Law on Personal Data Protection, consider options to establish common records and individual records.

1.2.4. Develop guidelines on information flow in accordance with the future service and inter-sectoral cooperation protocols.

1.2.5. Train professionals that would apply electronic records on cases of domestic violence.

3. Introduce training programmes on violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship in professional training plans and programmes for direct service providers to victims of violence

The introduction of training programmes for the professionals providing services to victims of violence include specialised courses on violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship, with content such as implementation of the General protocol of cooperation between institutions, authorities and organisations in situations of violence against women in the family and in intimate partner relationship, implementation of specific protocols, using and improving the system for recording cases of domestic violence, etc. The programmes mentioned shall go through accreditation procedures, and participants, that is staff, shall acquire knowledge and skills in the chosen areas, but also the possibility to gain points that serve for licensing staff for relevant services.

Activities:

1.3.1. Initiate the development of mechanisms for accreditation of training programmes and ongoing professional advancement in the area of violence against women in the family and intimate partner relationship in all relevant systems.

1.3.2. Initiate and financially support professional advancement in centres for social work, police, public prosecutor's office, courts, health and educational institutions, local self-governments, as well as CSOs dealing with the problems of violence against women. Education should be based on approaches and principles from international documents, scientific and professional knowledge and experience, as well as training in concrete procedures (General protocol and special protocols).

1.3.3. Establish roster of experts with completed training in the area of protection from domestic violence and other forms of gender based violence.

Implementers:

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice.

Partners:

Local self-government units, civil society organisations.

Deadline: end 2015.

Strategic Area Four: Systems of Measures of Victim Protection and Support

Outcome: Improve the system of measures of protection and support
for victims of violence

Objectives:

1. Improve measures of protection for victims of domestic violence

Activities:

1.1. Establish cooperation and coordination of services providing:

- 1) overall protection including harmonisation of all the necessary interventions, measures and services;
- 2) specific protection including appropriate measures and services for the victim of violence and other members of the family affected with violence;
- 3) effective protection including interventions, measures and services that stop current and prevent future acts of violence;
- 4) efficient support including interventions, measures and services provided in short time to prevent secondary victimisation and long-term damage to victims of violence.

1.2. Ensure intersectoral and interdisciplinary approach

1.2.1. Ensure intersectoral and interdisciplinary approach by developing existing integrated services for the victims of violence, and, based on best practices, introduce new services for the victims of violence.

1.2.2. Ensure violence risk analysis when planning activities or undertaking interventions, measures and services.

1.2.3. Improve specialised teams in the police and public prosecutor's office, composed of specially educated and trained professionals to work with victims of violence.

1.2.4. Based on best practice examples, develop mobile teams consisted of centre for social work staff, police and health institutions performing emergency intervention on reported violence.

1.2.5. Ensure and create conditions for women police officers to be a part of the police patrol intervening in cases of violence.

1.2.6. Initiate standardised operations for safe houses in Serbia in accordance with capacity assessment.

1.2.7. Ensure the safe houses cooperate with all relevant stakeholders – social stakeholder networking.

1.2.8. Set and organise a unique phone number for the territory of Serbia that would be used to report cases of violence and refer victims of violence to services in the local self-government.

2. Improve measures of support for women victims of domestic violence

Activities:

2.1.1. Improve measures of psychological and social services, services of personal assistance to women with disabilities and other expert assistance and support to victims of violence during criminal proceedings.

2.1.2. Ensure standardised health protection for women exposed to violence in the family and in intimate partner relationship.

2.1.3. Design, adopt and implement measures of affirmative action for employment and self employment of women who have experienced violence.

2.1.4. Consider the possibility of establishing financing and economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence in local self-governments.

2.1.5. Consider the possibility to establish central data base on services for violence victims that should enable easy access to data on available services on local and regional levels.

Implementers:

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice.

Partners:

Local self-government authorities, civil society organisations.

Deadline: end 2015.

7. Final remarks

Publish this strategy in the “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”.

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GOVERNMENT

FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Ivica Dacic