

CAPACITY-BUILDING TRAINING

Strengthening the capacities of women's CSOs and national stakeholders for policy advocacy, knowledge-based expansion and partnership facilitation on sexual violence in the Western Balkans and Turkey

17-19 February 2021

TIME: 10:00 – 14:00 CET

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The **Civil Society Strengthening Platform (CSSP)** is a platform established in 2017, which consists of nine women's civil society organisations (CSOs)¹, and has the aim to strengthen women's voices and agency, including that of women's organizations working with and representing women from disadvantaged marginalized groups, at a regional level. The platform was established as part of the EU/UN Women programme 'Implementing norms, Changing minds'. From 2020, the CSSP project started to focus on strengthening the capacities of regional CSO networks in the areas of policy advocacy, knowledge expansion and partnership working, with the aim of enabling them to more effectively support survivors of sexual violence in the region. The overall objective of this collaboration is the development and better implementation of laws, policies and services to address the needs of survivors of sexual violence as required by the standards of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence - the Istanbul Convention.

In 2019, the '**Mapping of Sexual Violence Services in the Western Balkans and Turkey**'², carried out by the CSSP platform, identified that out of seven project countries only three countries (Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia) have so far established specific services supporting victims of sexual violence, while four countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Turkey) currently have only limited or no specific services available to victims of sexual violence (SV). The mapping report furthermore identified that where such services do exist, they are in most cases newly-established and therefore lack the necessary capacity to support victims of sexual violence. Although efforts from national governments to establish these services have been observed, these services are precarious and lack specific funding allocated for long-term support.

Moreover, an increased need to supply capacity building and systematic training was identified by all parties involved in supporting victims of SV: including women's NGOs exclusively supporting victims of SV, women's NGOs working on violence against women in general, state institutions and other front-line professionals (police, doctors, social workers). The Istanbul Convention requires that sufficient numbers of specific support services such as rape crisis or sexual violence referral centres are available

¹ Women's CSOs in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey.

² https://cssplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CSSPWAVE_SVReport190927_web.pdf

* For the European Union, this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence. For UN Women, references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).



to victims of sexual violence and that these offer short term as well as long-term support options. Based on these findings and on the standards enshrined in the Istanbul Convention, WAVE and the CSSP partners aim to build the capacity of women's specialist services and other stakeholders in the region to better respond to the needs of victims of sexual violence.

With a view to address the findings of the Mapping report mentioned above, the **capacity building training** aims at promoting good practice standards in supporting victims of sexual violence, amongst women's specialist support services supporting victims of sexual violence, other women's CSOs as well as other relevant stakeholders such as policymakers. The training represents a good opportunity for all broadly used existing standards, some of which also apply to the partner countries, to be transposed and adapted to the specific needs of the seven project countries.

The **first training day** will serve as a general starting point for participants to get acquainted with good practise standards to be applied when supporting victims of sexual violence. This training part will be led by Dr **Cliona Saidléar**, Executive Director of the Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI). The RCNI is a national specialist sexual violence NGO established in 1985 by rape crisis centres in Ireland, building evidence and expertise to represent survivors' interests nationally and advocating for the best responses to sexual violence. RCNI works from the local to national level with survivors, stakeholders and government.

This training day will focus on the underlying guiding principles of a survivor-centred approach. We will examine the elements of a holistic specialist sexual violence response and prevention, drawing on the Irish model and senior statutory and professional partners, focusing particularly on the interagency collaboration and national coordination between the various stakeholders responsible for advocacy, support, justice, medical and forensic responses and prevention. This training day will include inputs from specialist NGOs, Sexual Violence Referral Centres (SVRCs), policing and the government alongside the current guidance and policies that define these various roles and responsibilities.

The **second day** of the training will focus on how the standards presented on the first day may be adapted into practise, and on presenting good practice standards already established by existing sexual violence centres in Serbia. The trainer for this day will be **Biljana Stepanov**, Director of the Center for Support of Women (CSW), Rape Crisis Centres (RCC), Serbia. CSW is a civil society organisation established in 2004 whose goal is to improve the status of women and to contribute to achieving gender equality and equal opportunities for women, when it comes to policymaking at a local, national and regional level. CSW provides specialised support services to women victims of violence, and organises various educational, promotional, advisory, research activities, among others. Participants will be introduced to the working model of the RCC in Serbia, as a unique practice example that combines two types of services from two public protection systems, social and healthcare system to fully protect women, victims of sexual violence. Participants will also be presented the protocols and standards of work of the centres, as well as the challenges and obstacles faced when providing these services. The last part of the training will involve presenting the work practice of rape crisis centres. One coordinator of services, responsible for the functioning of RCCs (directly working with hospitals) and one counsellor, working with victims of SV will be available to present their work.

The **third half day** of the training is exclusively dedicated to the CSSP project partners' internal meeting.



The **ultimate aim** of the training is to better prepare service providers in supporting victims of sexual violence, by promoting good practice standards already established by other countries but also in the Western Balkans and Turkey. An additional output of the two-day training will be the development of a policy paper, based on the training discussions, on good practice standards and how these may be adapted to particular country contexts. The policy paper will serve national policy makers and CSOs as a learning tool when establishing support services for victims of sexual violence, that can eventually inform a national service provision framework.

Training objectives

- Understanding how to provide a holistic service approach by examining the underlying principles and standards when supporting victims of sexual violence, the Irish model
- Providing a holistic understanding of the standards applicable and gaps encountered in specialist sexual violence service provision in the seven partner countries, the Serbian model
- Providing examples of interagency cooperation among different stakeholders responsible of supporting victims of sexual violence
- Improving the knowledge and capacity of participants and agreeing on how to move forward to better respond to the needs of victims of sexual violence, in accordance with the standards of the Istanbul Convention

Target audience

- Women's CSOs (working with victims of SV specifically or supporting victims of VAW in general)
- Senior Policymakers

A maximum of **50 participants** are foreseen to attend the training. However, should there be high interest in attending this training, more participants are welcome to attend.

Each country has a limited number of **7 participants** to attend the training, out of which: 1 CSSP partner representative, 4 women's CSOs, 2 policymakers.

Participants attending the training are encouraged to engage as much as possible with other participants and the trainers and to proactively share their expertise and country perspective of supporting victims of SV.

Language and Translation:

The working language of the capacity building training is English.

Simultaneous translation will be provided for the following languages:

-Albanian/Kosovo

-Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian

-Macedonian



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-Turkish

Duration

- 2,5 days in an online format, with the third half day being reserved for an internal meeting of the CSSP partner organisations

Dates

- 17 -18 February 2021 – Training dates
- 19 February 2021 – CSSP internal meeting

Time: 10:00 – 14:00, CET

Platform:

Zoom - Please register under the following link:

<https://braintrust.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kde2opjMuG9SBBylAJdPRtaly6mwFFrpt>

Registration is on a first come first served basis.

For any questions, please contact: Anca Ciupa, anca.ciupa@wave-network.org



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