

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

**Commission on Gender-Based
Violence and Domestic Violence**





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Message from the Minister

Minister Edward Zammit Lewis

During the challenging year of 2020, in my remit as the Minister for Justice, Equality and Governance, I worked very well with the Commissioner for Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Ms Audrey Friggieri, and in close collaboration with Parliamentary Secretary Rosianne Cutajar. Ms Audrey Friggieri is the first Commissioner for Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence to be appointed on a full-time basis.



During 2020, I made sure that the work related to the Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Action plan was being implemented accordingly by the Commission as the coordinating body, responsible for organising, monitoring, and evaluating policy measures aimed at preventing and combating gender-based violence and domestic violence.

To monitor the implementation of the pillars of the Istanbul convention, the Commission led the evaluation visit carried between GREVIO, government stakeholders and non-governmental organisations. Such visit was held between the 17th and the 21st of February 2020.

For the year 2020, the theme chosen for the 16 days of activism awareness raising campaign, was 'Not every home is a haven – reach out for the life you deserve'. This is a very important campaign in the Nation's calendar as it brings together various stakeholders. Dr Lydia Abela honoured us by taking this campaign under her patronage. Various initiatives were organized including social media & radio campaigns, a photography exhibition, a drawing competition for school children, storytelling workshops with residents in domestic violence shelters as well as participation in the media and panel discussions.

Besides raising awareness, it is of utmost importance that we continue to promote prevention. We continued to do so by providing training to professionals working in the field, specifically to the Gender Based and Domestic Violence Unit (GBDV) within the Malta Police Force, General Practitioners, Probation Officers, MCAST student mentors and Sedqa professionals. Also, a multi-agency training on elderly abuse was organized for which lawyers, doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, social workers, risk assessors, police from the GBDV unit, probation officers and representatives from domestic violence services and NGOs attended.

It is imperative to mention the nation-wide study, carried out to further knowledge with regards to the economic cost of violence against women in Malta.

I emphasise on the importance of the collaborations that were further strengthened throughout 2020, with the Legal Aid Agency, Victim Support Unit within the Malta Police Force and Agenzija Appoġġ through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. By signing another Memorandum of Understanding with MCAST, collaboration in the areas of training and research on gender-based violence and domestic violence was also fostered.

It is imperative that as a society we execute everything necessary to transform our structures and shift mindsets to overcoming gender-based and domestic violence. No individual should be considered less than another and in the same way no one should feel that they have any divine right over another. Let us work together in this direction!

Hon. Dr Edward Zammit Lewis
Minister for Justice, Equality and Governance

Foreword by Commissioner

During 2020 the Commission on Gender-based and Domestic Violence has worked tirelessly towards achieving the goals outlined in the Istanbul Convention that seek to create a Europe free from violence against women and domestic violence. The Commission has kept up its commitment to strengthen awareness about the fact that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, that women and girls are often exposed to serious forms of violence such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of so-called "honour" and genital mutilation. All of this constitutes a serious violation of the human rights of women and girls and is a major obstacle to the achievement of equality between women and men. The Commission also recognises that domestic violence affects women disproportionately, and that men may also be victims of domestic violence, as well as children who witness violence in the family.

In 2020 the Commission has continued to reach out to society, including by listening to individuals, NGOs and the general public, contributing newspaper articles, meeting various stakeholders, holding and participating in discussions about training needs and engaging in training for the various frontliners, raising awareness to the need to report cases of domestic violence and gender-based violence that spiked during the pandemic, and drawing attention to how cases are reported in the media. The Commission is committed to provide quality training for professionals and frontliners with an aim to continue improving services in the various sectors for those in need of help due to domestic violence and gender-based violence.

The Commission has used social media to spread information and educational messages throughout 2020, especially during the period between June and September, when the Commission embarked on a most successful national online educational campaign #intkapaċi #youcan, focusing specifically on helping people appreciate their personal power to change their lives for the better and of the importance to reach out for help and support that are freely available. A number of local popular personalities from all walks of life have generously contributed a video clip with an empowering message which was then shared online. We are happy to say that many of these video clips went viral, resulting in our messages reaching far and wide and sparking much public debate.

The Commission has also had a very full diary during the 16 days of activism for the elimination of violence against women. We have organised writing workshops in shelters for victims of domestic violence with the aim to help them externalise their traumatic experiences in a safe, calm and creative environment; a photographic competition with the theme: 'not every home is a haven', which was the message chosen by the Commission for 2020's 16 days of activism campaign; training courses for doctors (GPs), probation officers, professionals caring for the elderly and MCAST student mentors; participated in webinars and conferences about domestic violence and gender-based violence in Malta and Gozo, especially during COVID-19, as well as in various radio and TV programmes with an aim of spreading information and raising awareness about gender-based and domestic violence. A particular and special event that the Commission participated in was that organised by Dr Lydia Abela, where several towers around Malta and Gozo were lit in orange for the duration of the sixteen days of activism against domestic violence. The Commission has also endorsed a play for schoolchildren 'Alice in Wonderland' - a DIY-Theatre package that seeks to educate students about what abuse and violence could look like in real life, especially for girls and women.

In 2020 the Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MCAST so that young people can choose to study and specialise in areas that can help them understand better the phenomenon of domestic



Ms Audrey Friggieri
Commissioner

violence and gender-based violence as well as become proficient personally as well as professionally. The Commission has also engaged in introducing a dating violence prevention programme in MCAST and state secondary schools as well as in a national research on the economic cost of domestic violence in Malta which will be concluded in 2021.

As the coordinating body of the Istanbul Convention in Malta, the Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence oversees the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Action Plan. The action plan is implemented through the Inter-Ministerial Committee which includes representatives from various ministries and entities who meet to provide updates, discuss policy development, service provision, awareness-raising initiatives and share good practices in the area of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

During 2021 the Commission will continue to work with all stakeholders with undiminished zeal to achieve our common mission - to help decrease, if not entirely eliminate, violence against women and domestic violence by all means possible, not least by continuing to sensitise Maltese society to the imperative of respecting fundamental human rights at all costs.

The Commission

1

The Commission on Domestic Violence was set up on 1st March 2006 under Article 3 of the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 481). In 2018, the legislation was further updated and the Domestic Violence and Domestic Violence Act ¹ widened the remit of the Commission to include all forms of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

1.1 Members of the Commission

The Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence is made up of the Commissioner acting chairperson and twelve board members together with a board secretary.

Ms Simone Azzopardi served as chairperson until January 2020. In February, Ms Audrey Friggieri was appointed as full-time Commissioner.

Commissioner

Ms Audrey Friggieri

Members

Dr Cheryl Azzopardi
Ms Charlene Barbara
Insp. Louise Calleja
Mr Christian Camilleri
Mr Alex Caruana
Dr Charles Cassar
Dr Gabriel Farrugia
Ms Catherine Fenech
Ms Renee Laiviera
Mr Chris Micallef
Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri
Ms Joanne Sciberras Edwards

Secretary

Dr Marouska Debono

Employees of the Commission

Ms Katya Unah, Assistant Director
Ms Sasha Farrugia, Senior Manager
Ms Maria Farrugia, Manager (*Projects*)
Ms Annabelle Grech, Manager (*Research*)
Mr Ivan Scicluna, Manager (*Projects*)

¹ https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/8171/file/Malta_gender-based_violence_and_domestic_violence_act_2018_en.pdf



Commissioner with Minister Edward Zammit Lewis

Commission meetings

2

Twelve board meetings were held during 2020. Ten meetings out of twelve were held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

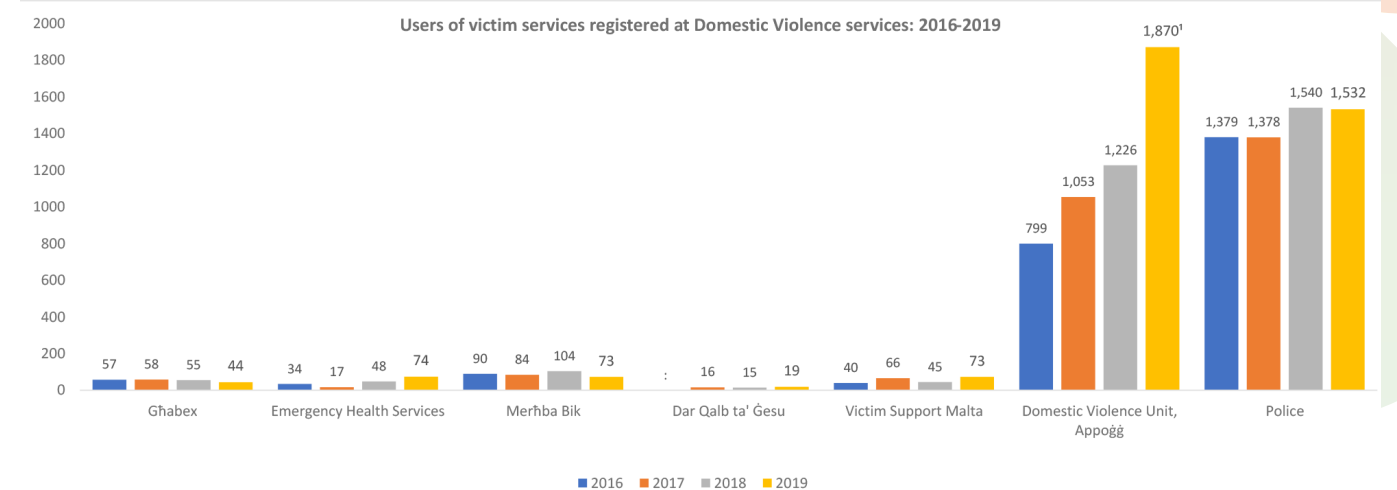
Meeting 1	20th Jan
Meeting 2	26th Feb
Meeting 3	25th Mar
Meeting 4	28th Apr
Meeting 5	28th May
Meeting 6	6th July
Meeting 7	27th July
Meeting 8	4th Sept
Meeting 9	1st Oct
Meeting 10	19th Oct
Meeting 11	12th Nov
Meeting 12	14th Dec

Research and Statistical reporting

3

The Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence collects data from the various stakeholders and NGOs who provide services to persons experiencing domestic violence. Data on gender-based violence and domestic violence is gathered on a yearly basis and harmonized by the National Statistics Office.

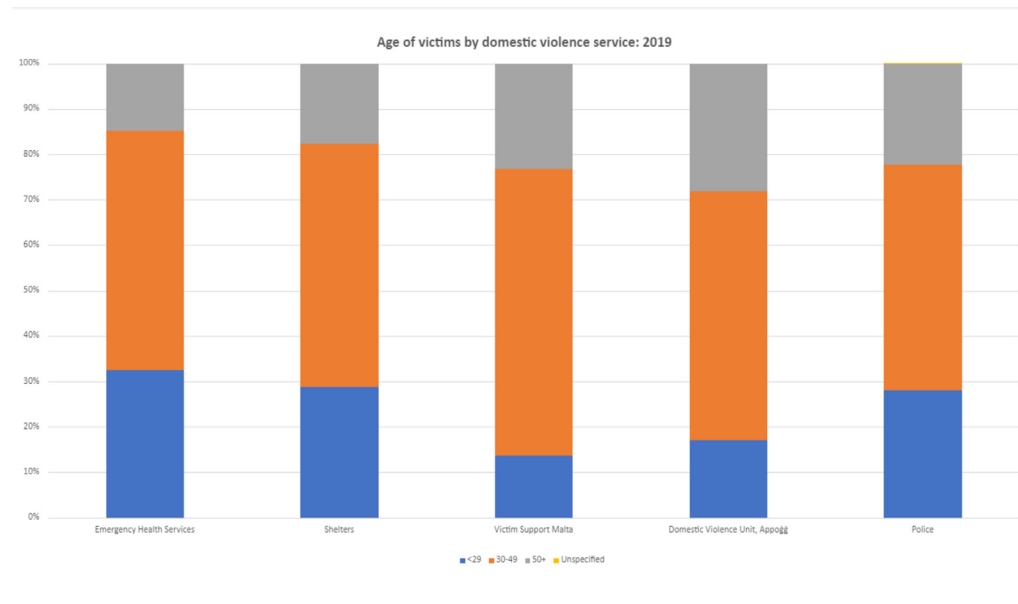
3.1 Users of victim services registered at domestic violence services: 2016-2019



Note:

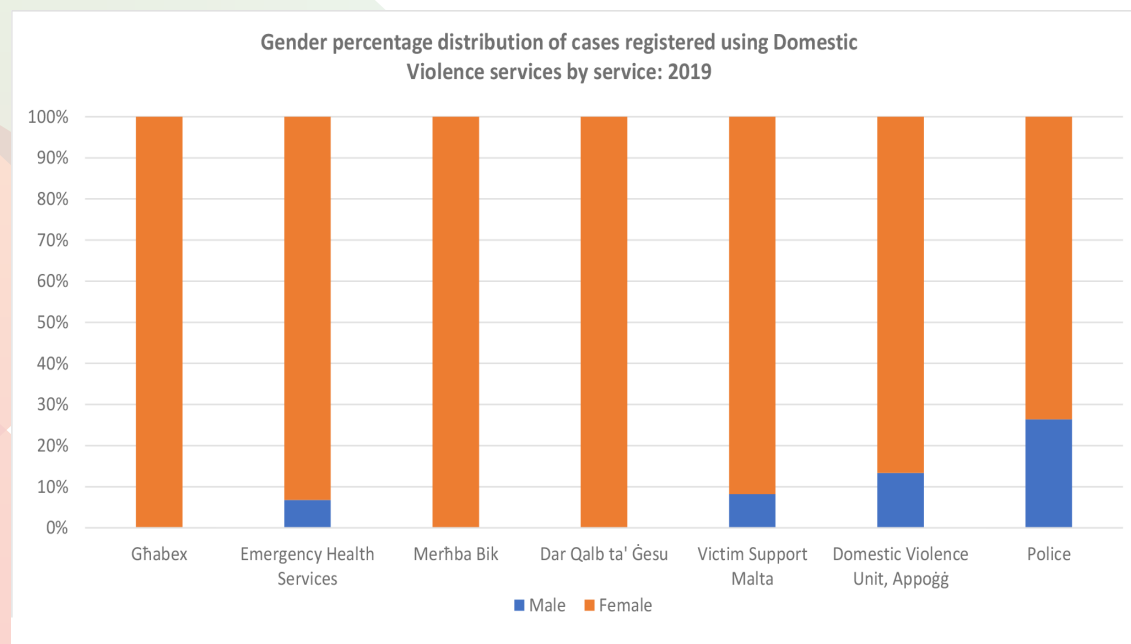
- Total figures represent the number of cases registered at the respective service and persons accessing services multiple times feature more than once.
- Data for Dar Qalb ta' Gesu was not available for 2016.
- Increase attributed to a change in operations and new legal provisions

3.2 Users of domestic violence services by age : 2019



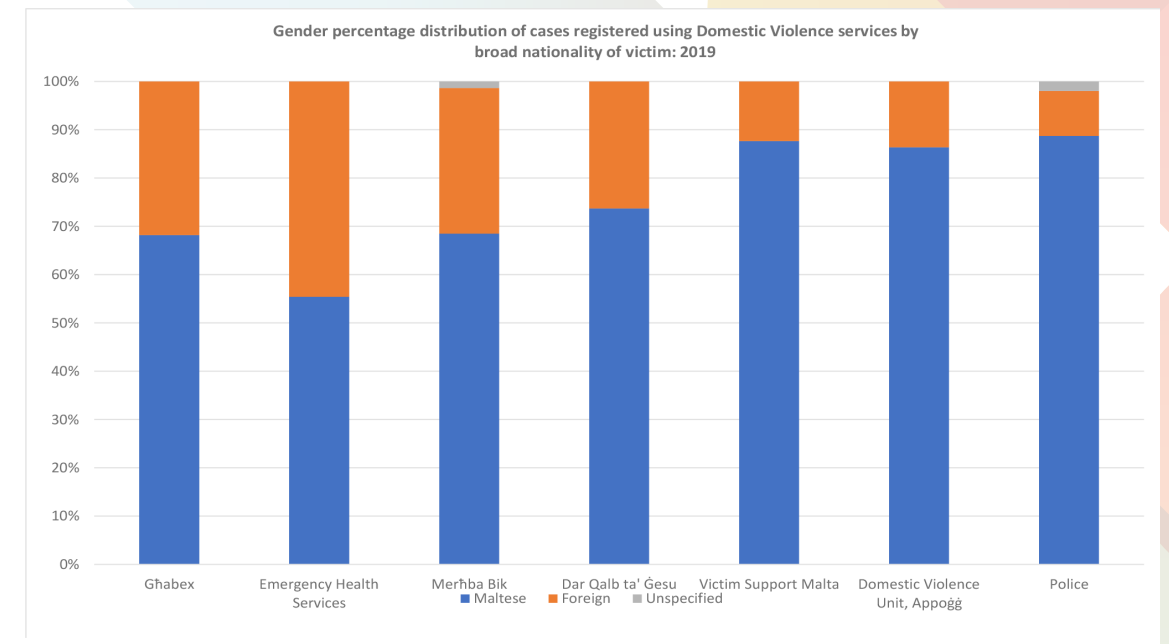
Note:
 · Total figures represent the number of victims registered at the respective service and persons accessing different services or the same service multiple times are counted more than once.

3.3 Users of domestic violence victim services by service and gender : 2019



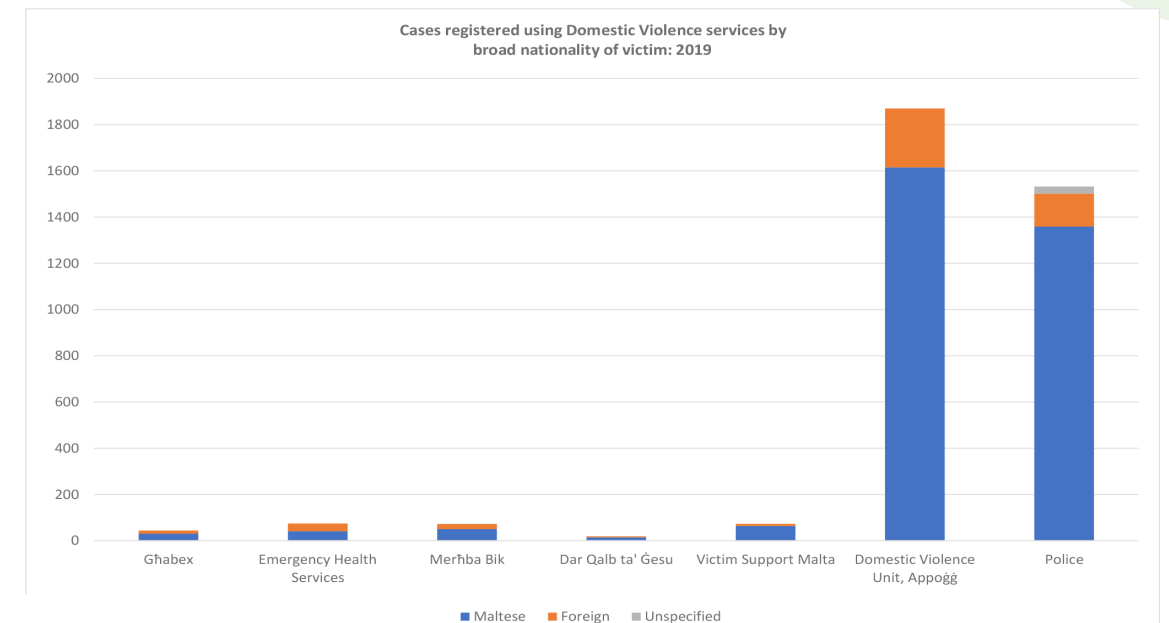
Note:
 · Total figures represent the number of victims registered at the respective service and persons accessing different services or the same service multiple times are counted more than once.

3.4 Gender percentage distribution of cases registered under domestic violence services by broad nationality of victim : 2019



Note:
 · Total figures represent the number of victims registered at the respective service and persons accessing different services or the same service multiple times are counted more than once.

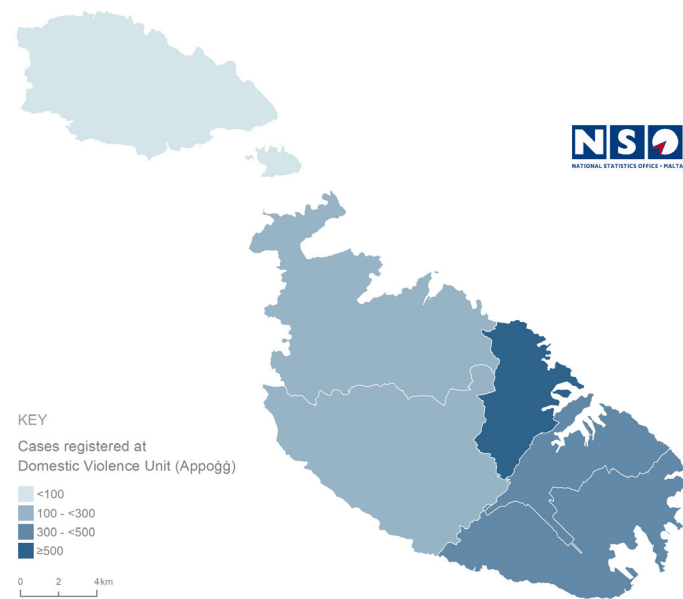
3.5 Cases registered using domestic violence services by broad nationality of victim : 2019



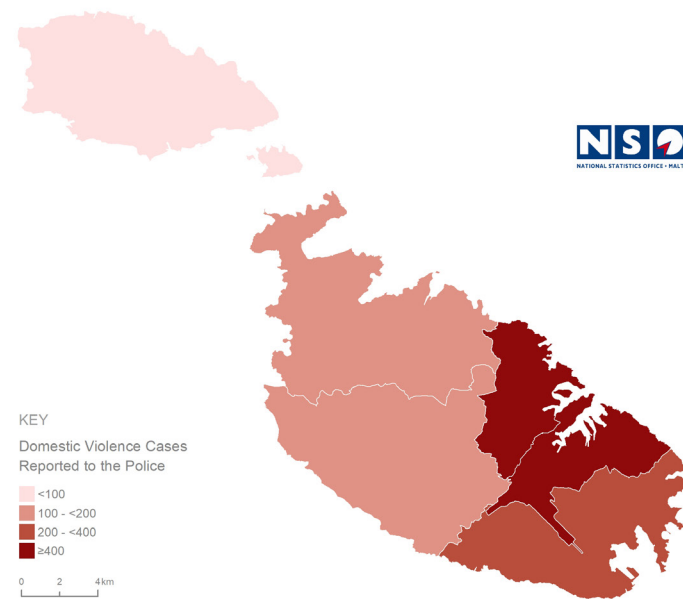
Note:
 · Total figures represent the number of victims registered at the respective service and persons accessing different services or the same service multiple times are counted more than once.

3.6 Users of victim services registered at domestic violence services by locality : 2019

3.6.1 Agenzija Appogg: Domestic Violence Unit

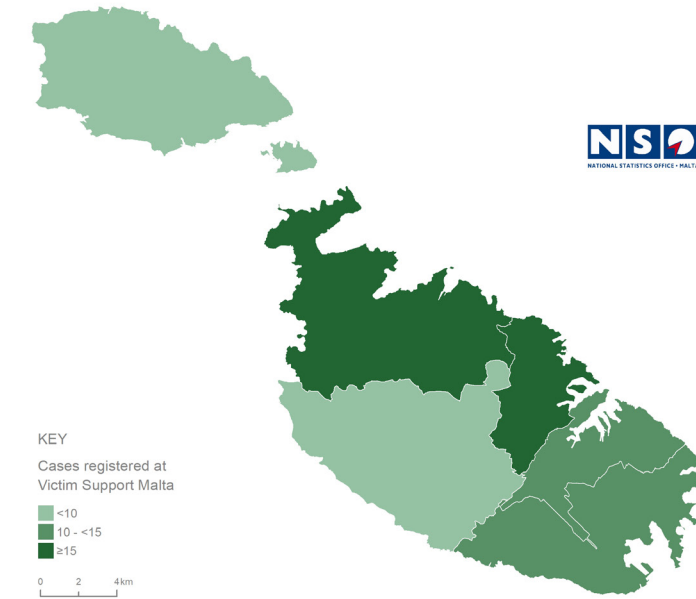


3.6.2 Malta Police Force

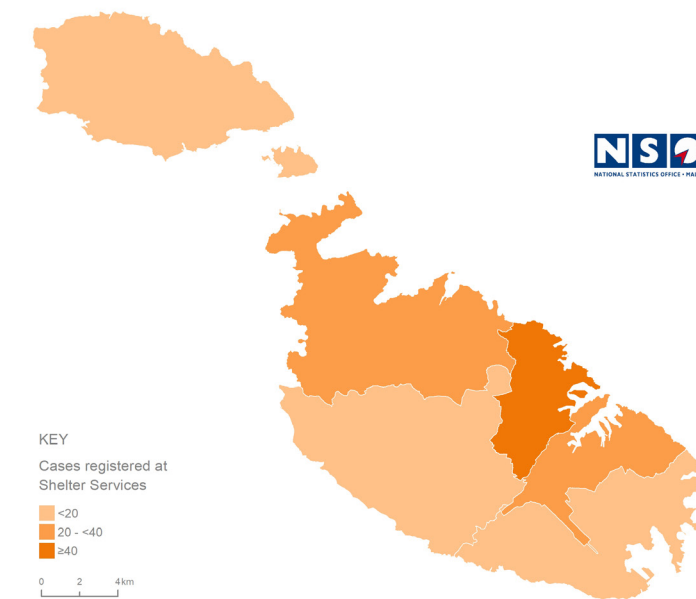


Note:
· The information collected by the Police represents the locality of incident rather than the locality of residence.

3.6.3 Victim Support Malta

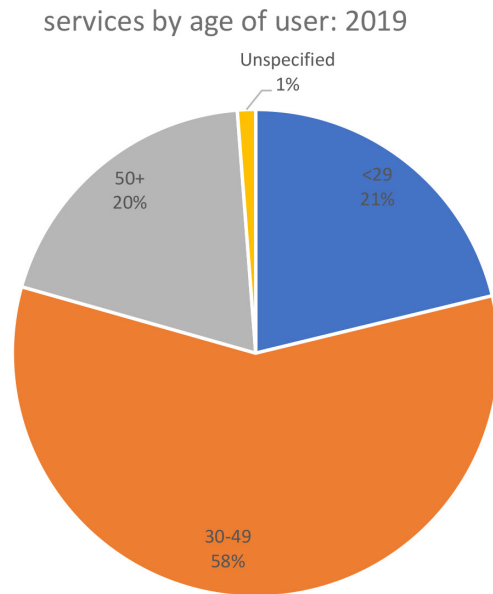


3.6.4 Domestic violence shelter services



Note:
· The information collected by the Police represents the locality of incident rather than the locality of residence.

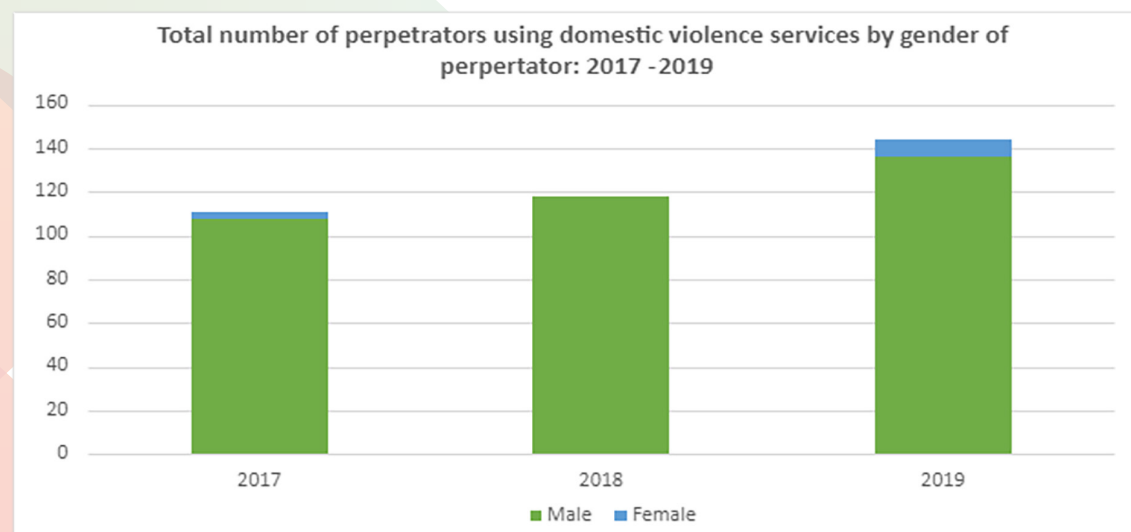
3.7 Registered cases of perpetrators making use of domestic violence services by age of user : 2019



Notes:

- Domestic violence services targeting perpetrators consists of the 'Managing Abusive Behaviour' programme and the Department of Probation and Parole.
- Total figures represent the number of cases registered at the respective service and therefore persons accessing different services or the same service multiple times are counted more than once.

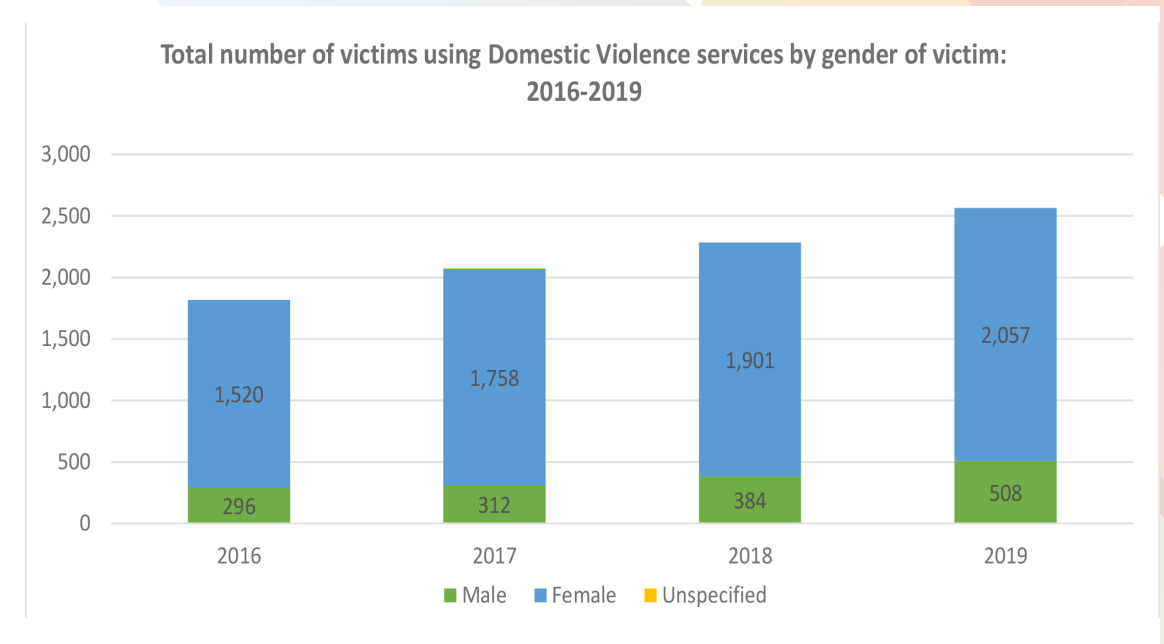
3.8 Total number of perpetrators using domestic violence services by gender of perpetrator : 2017 – 2019



Notes:

- Domestic violence services targeting perpetrators includes the 'Managing Abusive Behaviour' programme and the Department of Probation and Parole.
- Information from the Department of Probation and Parole is only available for 2019.
- This table does not tally with the tables on services since it is based on total number of individual persons and not on the number of cases/reports across services.

3.9 Total number of victims using domestic violence services by gender of victim : 2016-2019



Notes:

- This table does not tally with the previous tables since it is based on the total number of individual persons and not on the number of cases/reports across services.
- Aggregate data for 2016 does not include Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu.
- Service: Merħba Bik, Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu (2017-2018), Domestic Violence Unit (Appogg), Victim Support Malta, Police, Għabex and the Emergency Health services."

Implementation of 2020 Budget Measures

4

4.1 Study on the economic cost of violence against women in Malta

During 2020, a national research study on the economic cost of violence against women in Malta was carried out. The Commission engaged in an agreement with Prof. Joseph Falzon and the Foundation for Social Welfare Services who collaborated with Dr Marceline Naudi and Dr Vincent Marmara together with the main governmental and non-governmental service providers assisting persons affected by domestic violence to implement this budget measure.

The preliminary results of this study are expected to be made available during a webinar in January 2021.

4.2 Memorandum of Understanding with MCAST

On the 11th June 2020, the Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MCAST. The aim of this MoU is to enhance collaboration in the areas of training and research on gender-based violence and domestic violence.

The Commission and MCAST engaged in discussions towards the development of a general course on domestic violence, which was launched on the 10th December 2020.



Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission and MCAST



Commissioner at launch of course by MCAST

Stakeholder Meetings and Training

5

5.1 Meetings with local stakeholders

5.1.1 Meetings between Government stakeholders and NGOs

In 2020, the Maltese Government organized meetings between government stakeholders and NGOs which provide services to persons affected by gender-based violence and domestic violence to foster better collaboration and improve the support offered to victims.

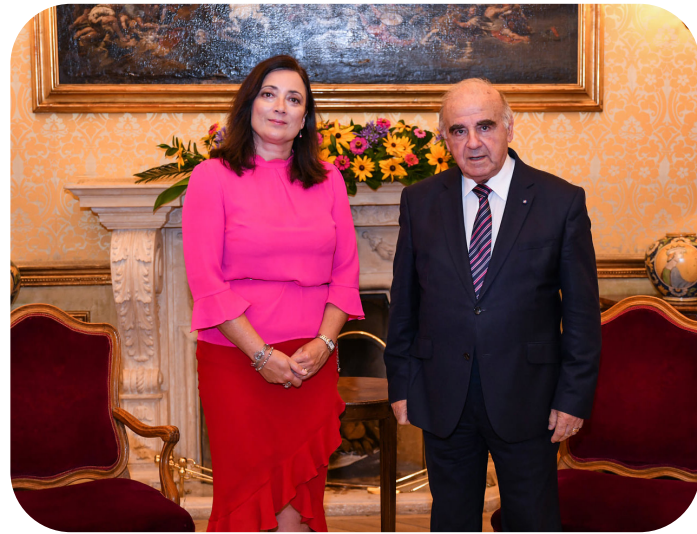
Meeting between Government and NGOs



Meeting between Government and NGOs

5.1.2 Meeting with President of Malta

On the 20th July 2020, Commissioner Ms Audrey Friggieri met with H.E. George Vella. The impact the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying restrictions had on persons experiencing gender-based violence and domestic violence was discussed as well as the importance of continued awareness-raising on the various forms of violence.



Commissioner with H.E. George Vella



Commissioner during meeting with H.E. George Vella

5.1.3 Commission meeting with Coalition on Human Trafficking and Prostitution

On the 1st October 2020, the Commissioner invited Dr Anna Borg from the Coalition on Human Trafficking and Prostitution to attend a board meeting during which she gave a presentation about the coalition's views and proposal in relation to the prostitution reform.

5.1.4 Board meeting with Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms

After meeting with the Coalition on Human Trafficking and Prostitution, the Commission members also met with Parliamentary Secretary Rosianne Cutajar on the 19th October to ascertain that all perspectives were listened to. Hon. Cutajar presented the Government's position with regards to the prostitution reform and welcomed the Commission's feedback and involvement in the drafting of the law.

5.1.5 Meeting with newly appointed Minister for Education

The Commissioner met with the new Minister for Education, Dr Justyne Caruana, in December 2020. The aim of this meeting was to discuss initiatives aimed at raising awareness about gender-based violence and domestic violence in schools thus addressing the Istanbul Convention's pillar of prevention.



Commissioner meets Hon. Justyne Caruana

5.2 Training for professionals

5.2.1 Induction training for Police



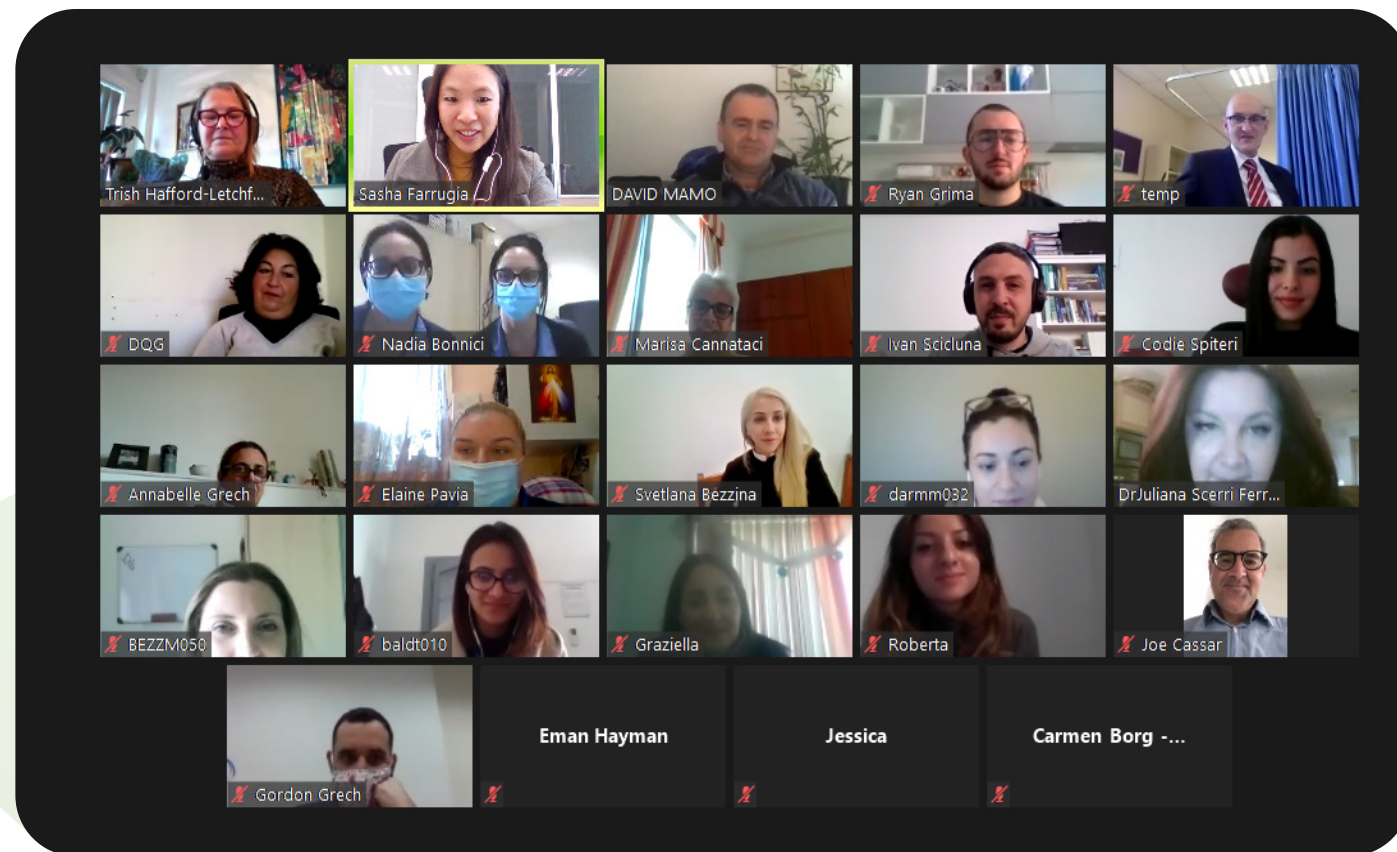
Training organized for GBDV unit

In September 2020, the Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence coordinated an induction training for the newly set up GBDV unit within the Malta Police Force. The Police received training on services for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence offered by government as well as non-governmental organisations and on the law. The specialized unit began operating on the 1st October.

5.2.2 Multi-agency training on elderly abuse

A training needs analysis carried out with the Inter-Ministerial Committee revealed the need for training in the area of elderly abuse. The Commission carried out the necessary research to identify a trainer with adequate knowledge and experience in this subject.

Professor Trish Hafford-Letchfield, a Professor of Social Work at the University of Strathclyde, accepted the Commission's invitation to deliver this training for professionals. Due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions, this multi-agency training was held online on the 7th and 18th December 2020. Professionals invited to attend the training included lawyers, doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, social workers, risk assessors, police from the GBDV unit, probation officers and representatives from domestic violence services and NGOs.



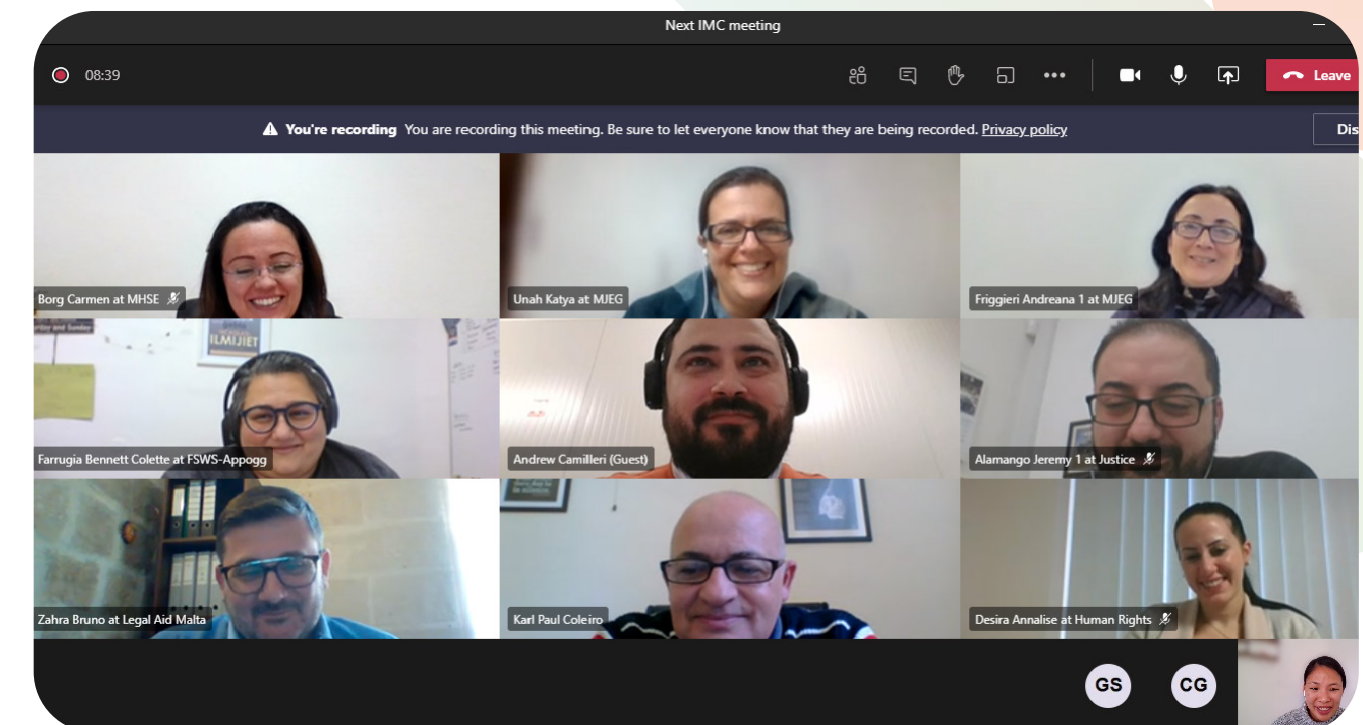
Participants during online training on elderly abuse

Implementation of the National Action Plan and country monitoring by GREVIO

6

6.1 Implementation of the National Action Plan

During 2020, the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) held monthly meetings to discuss the monitoring and implementation of the national action plan. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions announced in March, the IMC meetings were shifted online.



Throughout 2020, the Commission chaired a total of ten Inter-Ministerial Committee meetings:

9th Jan	22nd Jul
28th Feb	2nd Sep
7th Apr	30th Sep
8th May	27th Oct
12th Jun	9th Dec

In addition to the IMC meetings, through the EU co-funded project GBVSO, the Commission coordinated four meetings between NGOs working in the area of gender-based violence and domestic violence and government stakeholders, namely Aġenzija Appoġġ and the Malta Police. The aim of these meetings was to share updates on service provision and discuss concerns as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. These meetings were held online on the below dates.

- 5th May
- 2th Jun
- 14th Jul
- 1st Sep

The table depicts the implementation of the 27 policy measures of the national action plan ¹

Achieved	Pending	Total number of measures
24	3	27

6.2 Country monitoring by GREVIO

Following Malta's submission of its Baseline Report to GREVIO, a delegation from the latter conducted an evaluation visit from the 17th to the 21st of February 2020. The purpose of such visit was to meet with relevant stakeholders in the field, governmental and non-governmental entities alike, and discuss Malta's success in fulfilling the standards outlined in the Istanbul Convention. GREVIO drew up its First Baseline Evaluation Report on Malta in line with the delegation's observations during their visit. Maltese authorities and the Committee of Parties were subsequently allowed the opportunity to respond to this report with their comments. All reports and responses were concluded and published by the end of 2020 ².



Commission members with the GREVIO delegation

¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/malta>

² https://meae.gov.mt/en/Documents/GBV_DV%20Strategy%20and%20Action%20Plan%20publication.pdf

EU Co-funded Projects

7

7.1 Breaking the Cycle of Violence

Breaking the Cycle of Violence is a project co-financed by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme of the EU with a budget of approximately €350,000. It aims to complement Malta's plan of action to implement the Istanbul Convention. The objective of this project is to raise awareness among women who are more susceptible to suffer violence of all forms – psychological, economic, physical or sexual. These women were identified to be women with some form of disability, migrant women and LGBTI women, and were adopted as the target groups for this project.

The project incorporates an awareness-raising campaign for the general public, information sessions, an educational programme for children and youth, the development of a mentoring programme for women which fall under any one of the target groups mentioned above, as well as research on violence trends.

The project was scheduled to end in June 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic an extension was granted by the European Commission for the project to come to a close in December 2020.

7.1.1 Project deliverables in 2020

During 2020, the last deliverables were implemented. The first was the 'Be the Change Festival'. The Festival was originally scheduled as a one-day campaign to advocate and raise awareness on VAW among the general public, organised by the Girl Guides and Scouts Association, where their members would present actions developed during the educational programme and engage other children and youths to advocate against VAW. Due to COVID-19 restrictions this event took place online on three separate dates; Tuesday 22nd September, Thursday 24th September, and Saturday 26th September 2020. The first two sessions were open to the public and focused on awareness-raising. Presentations on services, such as the Victims Support Unit and kellimni.com, were given. The last event focused on presenting actions to raise awareness and advocate on VAW prepared by children of the different age groups and youth ambassadors. This session was primarily aimed towards members of the girl guides and scouts, but the public was also invited to attend. Some of the topics covered were:



Webinar invitation

- Gender inequality & Discrimination
- Learning to Say NO
- How to express your feelings & bullying
- Sexism & Sexualisation / Homophobia / Transphobia/ Abused men / Warning Signs
- How to seek help

7.1.2 Final conference

The final conference of the project took place on Friday 25th September 2020. The aims of the conference were to share the results of the project, present the results of the UOM research report, and discuss ways of future collaboration between the partners. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, most foreign delegates that were planned to attend the conference were unable to be present. Thus, arrangements were made by the project team for the conference to be recorded. The recording, together with the conference report, were made available to all those who were unable to attend, including foreign delegates. A sign language interpreter was also engaged to make the conference accessible to persons with hearing impairment.



Dr Dibben at final conference



Panel discussion during final conference

7.1.3 Awareness-raising initiatives during COVID

During the COVID-19 crisis, the project team felt the need to go beyond the project's deliverables and focus on how this crisis may be affecting those people suffering violence in silence. The team prepared an extensive awareness raising campaign on various Maltese news portals whereby messages were disseminated in various languages to try and reach the highest number of people possible. This campaign was coordinated in conjunction with another campaign led by the Commission that used bus shelters across Malta and Gozo as its medium.



GIFs on online newspapers in English and Maltese



Bus shelter campaign in Filipino

7.2 GBVSO – Improving Support Structures for Victims of Gender Based Violence

The project, Violet Support Online - Improving Support Structures for Victims of Gender Based Violence (GB-VSO) was co-funded by the European Union (EU) DG Justice Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme and ran from November 2018 until November 2020. The project involved collaboration between 5 partners from the public, private and civil society sectors. The partners are Solidarity and Overseas Service Malta (SOS Malta), Victim Support Malta, CORE platform, Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence (CDV) and Advenio E-academy (AeA LTD).

The project aimed to improve support structures and provide protection to victims of gender-based violence. Throughout the project, the Commission was responsible for:

1. The development of a research study to identify key trends and needs of victims of GBV, with a focus on the place of work, recommendations report for training and recommendations for policy makers;
2. The organisation of a Steering Group Committee to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration in developing responses to GBV&DV in Malta;
3. The promotion of an online accredited training course for staff tasked with the wellbeing of employees and victims of GBV. CDV actively promoted the online training course and encouraged the involvement of the public service and HR personnel to ensure the wellbeing of their employees;
4. Awareness raising and outreach: Increased awareness and understanding of GBV&DV among the general public, with reference to the workplace. Awareness raising campaigns were mainly carried out on social media, through the 16 days of activism; and
5. Organising a webinar at the end of the project to disseminate project results, create panel discussion and ensure sustainability beyond the project.

7.2.1 Research study

A research study was carried out during the first period of the project. The study 'Situation of Gender-Based Violence in Malta: Experiences and Effects at the Workplace', discusses phenomena pertaining to risk and mediating factors that promote GBV in various activity fields. The findings emanating from this research will guide policy makers in view of potential training for workers and employers exercising their duties in the Maltese Islands.

The research study shows that respondents look at the support systems in three main ways: foresight, formalisation and follow-up. In terms of foresight, respondents feel the need to offer more awareness to staff about what constitutes GBV, readily available information and more effective communication with and between employees even on informal levels. In terms of formalisation, respondents express the need to have official guidelines, and in terms of follow-up, respondents focused on the need to keep the procedures updated to ensure that staff are continuously supported and that a self-help group could be setup across entities.



Violet logo

Findings of the research study also show the need to carry out a larger scale study to address the magnitude of GBV. The need for training of staff was also noted which needs to be provided in various ways that include awareness, the design of policy guidelines as well as awareness campaigns at the workplace. Participants in the survey and interviewees outlined the need for zero tolerance but more importantly to have effective accountability procedures in place, wherein when GBV is flagged third party professionals and specialised NGOs are roped in to mitigate in such cases. It was also evident that specialised training as part of professional development of staff is crucial and has to be designed to meet the needs of the workplace as some settings promote GBV more than others as a number of risk and mediating factors to violence prevail. In view of this, one must be aware that the workplace represents a melting pot of cultures and phenomena related to tolerance and violence are also culture specific.

The research study was launched on 17th October 2019.

7.2.2 Steering Group Committee

One of the objectives of the Violet Project is to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration in developing responses to GBV in Malta, through the setting up of a steering committee and the dissemination of the research findings. A total of nine [9] Steering Group Meetings were held.

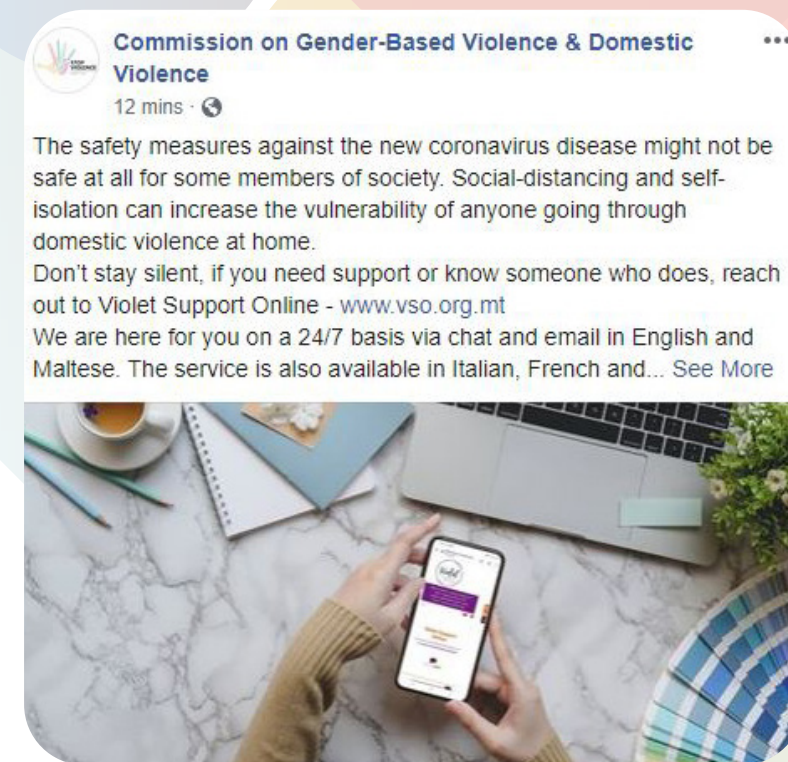


Steering Committee Meeting

The objective is to create a steering committee to strengthen cooperation between different stakeholders in order to prevent and combat gender-based violence effectively. The Steering Group Committee was made of members from various sectors of society, including Malta's Employers Association, participants from the University of Malta and representatives of the Private Sector. This collaboration allows us to raise awareness on the subject and to promote the online course to a group of people who are responsible for the wellbeing of their staff. Members of the SGC were encouraged to develop and implement effective workplace policies to tackle GBV and support victims of GBV.

7.2.3 Online campaign

During the 16 Days of Activism, CDV made use of social media, mainly through its own Facebook Page to raise awareness about gender-based violence, challenge discriminatory attitudes and call for improved laws and services to end gender-based violence for good. CDV, together with all other project partners, posted several images, video clips, articles and other material to make a difference in ending violence against women and girls everywhere.



Awareness-raising on Facebook

7.2.4 Online training course

Another objective of this project is the development and implementation of an online course. The Award in Gender-Based Violence Support for HR Professionals is an online accredited programme by the National Commission for Further and Higher Education, with 2 ECTS credits at EQF/MQF Level 5.

This award includes various guests from the field of gender-based violence and human resources who impart their specialized knowledge and talk about their practical experiences.

CDV has recruited participants to take part in the pilot testing of this course before rolling it out online. The testing included evaluation sessions at the end in order to make necessary arrangements. This led to an adaptation and finalisation of the course. Following this, CDV has contacted all Government HR departments in order to encourage them to participate in this course. Members of the Steering Group were also encouraged to disseminate this course to their members, colleagues and staff.

A total of 3 intakes were carried out during the project's timeline.

7.2.5 Webinar

On 24th September 2020, a webinar was organised to present the final project results. The aim of this webinar was to raise awareness and understanding of gender-based violence and domestic violence, increase knowledge on the subject and in particular how this is experienced and affects the workplace; and encourage managers and HR staff to attend specialised training on how to tackle gender-based violence at the workplace.

The webinar included keynote speakers to discuss Gender-based Violence support for HR professionals, support services available to survivors of domestic violence, gender-based violence in relation to employment, and good practice from Portugal on bullying and sexual harassment.

Community Awareness

8

8.1 Raising awareness through the media

8.1.1 Newspaper articles

Since her appointment as Commissioner, Ms Audrey Friggieri, has written various articles to raise awareness about issues surrounding gender-based violence and domestic violence in several local newspapers.

Domestic violence in the media

TALKING POINT

AUDREY FRIGGIERI

Commissioner on Gender-based and Domestic Violence



The media has an essential role to play in informing and educating people about the reality of domestic violence and the effects it has on families and communities in our society, especially women and children. The complex nature of domestic violence means that quite often it comes to be misrepresented, minimalised or sensationalised. The way the news is framed, including how individuals and events are portrayed, can influence personal, political, policy and social justice responses. While there is increasing emphasis on the potential for

the media to play a role in the prevention of violence against women, research findings suggest that the content of news reports frequently misrepresents the issue.

For example, while there are various ways of embedding and promoting understanding of the social constructions of male perpetrated violence within news coverage (e.g. by acknowledging underlying societal and gender-based factors), research shows that few media reports do so.

A body of research work shows that instead, there is a tendency for media reports of violence against women to use event-based reporting or 'episodic' framing (Sutherland et al., 2019).

When news coverage is focused on incidents or events happening at specific places and points in time, there is a tendency for individualistic attributions of responsibility to be emphasised.

This kind of reporting does not do justice to the systemic nature of gender-based and domestic violence, and the audience is thus prevented from

seeing the 'big picture'. Research show that sources, conventions and institutional constraints may constitute obstacles in the way of accurate reporting. Establishing positive working relationships with experts in the area of domestic violence will help journalists and broadcasters access accurate and reliable information that will ensure that the public receives information that does justice to the complexities of this scourge in our society.

“Violence against women is now recognised as one of the most serious challenges to health and social inclusion for women and girls worldwide

Violence against women is now recognised as one of the most serious challenges to health and social inclusion for women and girls worldwide.

Defined as “any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women” (United Nations), it is a prevalent and pervasive issue with far-reaching individual and community impacts.

Recent estimates indicate that one in every three women in Europe and 15 per cent of women in Malta over the age of 15 have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their current or former partner.

Most women experience violence perpetrated by someone they know, most often a current or former male partner. Forms of harm from violence are wide-ranging and include deleterious effects on physical and mental health.

Children exposed to violence can experience a range of social, behavioural, emotional and cognitive problems that often continue into adulthood (WHO, 2019).

The Commission on Gender-based and Domestic Violence strongly recommends that more journalists and broadcasters continue to look for ways to elevate reporting on domestic violence, and advocates for more sensitivity and accuracy in how it is covered.

Media professionals need to be exploring how factors like class, sexual orientation, age, race and immigration status can influence victims' vulnerability to domestic violence and be willing to report it, also addressing how the criminal justice system and service providers deal with these cases.

Journalists and broadcasters of all stripes who write about the phenomenon of gender-based and domestic violence need to engage with examining the roots of the problem, efforts to rehabilitate perpetrators, and patterns of abuse.

Guidelines for reporting domestic violence may be found at <https://stopviolence.gov.mt/en/Documents/Docs/Reporting%20Domestic%20Violence%20-%20consultation%20document.pdf>.

Article on the Times of Malta

L-Edukazzjoni, il-benesseri u l-vjolenza domestika; x'ghandhom x'jaqsmu ma' xulxin?

Audrey Friggieri hija Kommissarju dwar vjolenza sabiexi tal-ġeneru u vjolenza domestika.

Il Pablo (isem fittizju) hadd ma seta' jikkontrollah - meta jiehu għalih fuq xi baġa jew ma jifhem xi jkun qed jgħri, kien jinlewx jikkolliem hażin, jgħajjar, isabbat u jwaddab l-affarijiet. Min jaf kemm qali' kaстиg l-iskola? Min jaf kemm serjati mal-membri tal-amministrazzjoni u mal-ghalliem? Pablo kien bidel diversi (oster homes u kien jgħidli li lili ma jridu hażin. Missieru kien diebel u hiergi il-habs, u meta kien ilam barra rari kien iktar jid-dux. Ommu għamlet żmien f'istituzzjoni għal-salva mentali u wara ma riditx taf li-Salva li skontha kien frott ta' stupru u kien jikkarta fir-raġel li tant kienet tobghod. Dwar tarb liżewwogiet u għamlet familja oħra. Pablo naslanittant kien qed jgħix daqqiet għand is-nanna u daqqiet f'istituzzjoni, jgħidli u fi-istess hin irrabjat kemm għal ommu kif ukoll għal missieru. Qatt ma kien jgħid liżewwogiet shiha, mohhu biex jinbex jew ara kif se jikkarta. Kien sensitiv hafna u jgħidli għal min jagħtli harsa żejda jew jgħidli għadli jgħidli li li Pablo ma toghbux. Jgħidli kien imur joqgħod fit-toilet jew jitalja. Si-żenituri tal-iskola, dejjem imfittex, dejjem irrapportat, dejjem meqjus diżubbidjenti u meqjus riġpet. Il-membri tal-amministrazzjoni spiss kien ikollhom kunflitt dwar l-oħra mod kif jissolva l-problema? Pablo: nikollhom milli jgħidli l-iskola għax qed jgħidli li-harsa kemm lili nniġu kif ukoll li-oħra? "Jew naraw kif nistgħu nghanah iktar?" Imma kif? "Ipprovajna kollha?"

Hawn xi hadd minna li konna naghmlu abur kieku għaddejna milli jgħadde jgħadde bhal Pablo? Meta qalbek tkun daqqiet maqsuma, tista' tkun 'normali'? Xi tkun 'normali' fuq kollha?

Il-vjolenza fost it-tfal u l-żgħażaġ

Diversi studji sabu li hemm fatturi varji u kumplessi li jwasslu għal riskju ikbar ta' riżultati vjolenti fit-tfal u fil-adolozenti, fost oħrajn li tkun int stress vittima ta' abbuż u vjolenza (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2015).

M'illux, fil-media soċjali għe rappurtat li kien hemm żieda f'kazijiet ta' vjolenza domestika fejn l-ulied jerfghu idejhom fuq il-ġenituri. Dawn hawn suġġett li ma tantx jossessu f'edukazzjonijiet dwar vjolenza domestika u hawn ikkonsiderat bħala fenomenu mobbi u li hemm bżonn jiġi studjat iktar (Ibabe, 2019, Coogan, 2011).

Le-evidenza turi li f'familji bhal dawn aktarx li jkun hemm abbuż fiziku u psikologiku fuq l-ulied minn-naha tal-ġenituri stess. Hawn maħsub li din l-evidenza tkun għajja minn sens ta' displacement għax ma jafux

Tfal u żgħażaġ bhal Pablo jgħorru magħhom kull fejn imorru t-tbatijiet li jesperjenzaw fit-trobbija tagħhom. It-traskuraġni, l-izolament u n-nuqqas ta' stabbilita' jiffurmawhom u jimmarkawhom

kif ikunu ġenituri abjar (Cottrell & Monk, 2004; Edenborough et al., 2008; Gallagher, 2004). Dawn il-familji spiss ikunu izolati fil-komunita' u jsofru fis-silenzju (Coogan, 2011).

L-edukazzjoni u l-imhabba

Meta t-tfal u l-żgħażaġ imorru l-iskola ikun hemm it-tentazzjoni li narawhom bħala haġa waħda: studenti. Imorru l-iskola biex jgħallmu u jifhem moħħom, halli meta jikbru jgħidli xogħol u jgħidli l-istat tagħhom. Dan hu s-sens kunsun. Eżda fil-fatt, kull tifel u tifla għandhom l-istorja partikulari tagħhom, u jkun hemm sejjer li kapaċi jwabhax lil kull min jahseb li jgħidli xi tip ta' 'normali'. Hemm nies li jsofru fis-skiet, f'iswazzjonijiet li mhux faċili tifhimhom jew tagħmel sens minnhoen. Il-vjolenza u l-abbuż spiss huma riżultat ta' dawn is-sitwazzjonijiet u hawnhekk l-iskola, bħala 'l-tieni dar' ta' t-tfal tagħna, għandha rwol importanti hafna.

Tfal u żgħażaġ bhal Pablo jgħorru magħhom kull fejn imorru t-tbatijiet li jesperjenzaw fit-trobbija tagħhom. It-traskuraġni, l-izolament u n-nuqqas ta' stabbilita' jiffurmawhom u jimmarkawhom hafna drabi għal għomorhom (Crowley, 2016). Huma ma jgħidli jiffukaw fuq it-tagħlim jekk il-bżonnijiet fundamentali tagħhom tal-imhabba u tas-sigurtà' ma jgħidli sodisfatti.

Ma tkunx qed issir ġustizzja magħhom jekk (ikomplu) jiġu esklużi u/jew diskriminati minhabba imġieba frott hruxijiet f'haġġom li huma qatt ma għażi (Case, 2018).

Jgħidli jgħidli iktar spazju u valur lill-hsieb hies u kritiku f'edukazzjoni ta' uliedna. Ir-riflessjoni u d-djaloga jgħidli jgħidli minn haġġom abjar dak li jkun għaddej f'haġġom u madwarhom. Jifhem e-rabja u d-dispjaċir minn fejn għejn u kif jgħidli isbu l-wens u tama għada.

Il-Covid-19 kompli jgħidli għajnejna għal realtaziet varji ta' żvantaġġ li jgħidli

fihom diversi tfal u studenti. Jekk qabel kienu izolati, issa qed ikunu iktar, minhabba li l-kuntatt bejn l-edukaturi u l-istudenti qed jiddependi esklussivament mit-teknoloġija. Apparti l-arranġamenti varji li jgħidli jgħidli fihom familji differenti, fejn jista' jkun hemm nuqqas ta' spazju u kwiet neċessarju biex it-tfal jgħidli jikkoncentraw, il-ġenituri mhux kollha midhla tal-komputer, mhux kollha għandhom ir-riżorsi meqjus bħala 'normali' fil-post fejn joqgħodu, u mhux kollha kapaċi jiddisziplinaw u jgħidli l-uliedhom skont kif tassumi l-iskola.

Jgħidli jgħidli mill-esperjenza li offrtilna l-pandemija u nfiżsu modi oħra kif nifhem l-dawn it-tfal u l-żgħażaġ individwalment, sabiex tassaww isir ġustizzja magħhom.

F'hekk huma wkoll ikollhom aċċess għall-assistenza partikulari li jista' jgħidli jgħidli għal edukazzjoni siera u tghinhom isiru persuni kapaċi u attivi fid-demokrazija ta' pajjiżna.

Article on Illum



MARIA AZZOPARDI
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“TAHRIĠ FEJN TINTUŻA R-REALTÀ VIRTWALI JĦALLI IMPATT IKBAR FUQ IL-MOHH”



bis-serjetà dan il-fenomeni li qed ikisser tant familji u individwi.

Friggieri qalet li tilqa' din l-ahbar b'fiducja li gradwalment ahna bhala soċjetà qed nempatizzaw iżjed ma' min qed ibati. “Konsegwenza ta' dan il-progress fi żmienna, qed jizjed id-dibattitu fost in-nies dwar problemi li forsi qabel kienu jibqgħu wara bibien magħluqa. Dan l-gharfien għid fis-soċjetà tagħna qed iwassal biex jinholqu strutturi dejjem aqwa għall-benefiċċju ta' familji u individwi li jkunu għaddejnin minn vjolenza domestika, fenomenu iktar komuni milli naħsbu u li jista' jmissna lkoll b'xi mod jew iehor, xi darba jew ohra fil-hajja tagħna,” qalet Friggieri.

“Tahriġ permezz tas-simulator hu aktar effettiv minn dak li jsir fil-klassi tradizzjonali”

Friggieri ziedet tghid li r-riċerka turi li t-tahriġ permezz tas-simulator huwa aktar effettiv minn dak li jsir għewwa l-klassi tradizzjonali, permezz ta' vidjows jew ta' moduli on-lajn, partikolarment fejn tidhol il-memorja: tahriġ fejn tintuża r-realtà virtwali jhalli impatt ikbar fuq il-moħh ta' min ikun qed jitharreg.

“Bhala Kummissjoni ninsabu kuntenti hafna li fil-futur qrib se jkollna ferm iktar uffċjali tal-pulizija mħarġa apposta, u sensitivi għal dak li jgħarbu persuni u familji għaddejnin mill-vjolenza do-

mezzika. B'dan il-mod, dawn in-nies iħossuhom iktar rispettati u protetti b'tali mod li ssir mill-inqas hsara psikoloġika u emozzjonali possibbli lilhom, speċjalment fejn jidhlu t-tfal, meta jmorru jagħmlu rapport. Mhadd ma jixraqlu jiġi abbużat għewwa daru stess, u wisq inqas jekk dak li jkun iħossu abbużat għat-tieni darba jekk isib persuni li ma jifhmux jew ma jurux is-sensittività dovuta lejn is-sitwazzjonijiet li jiġu rrapurtati lilhom,” qalet Friggieri filwaqt li ziedet li din hi sfida importanti li issa qed tiġi indirizzata u rringrazzjat lill-Kummissarju Gafà u lil kull min kellu x'jaqsam mal-inizjattiva hekk importanti u l-implimentazzjoni tagħha.

“Irridu nahdmu iktar fuq it-twaqqif ta' skwadra speċjali fuq il-vjolenza domestika fil-qrati tal-gustizzja”

Friggieri qalet li sfida ohra li temmen li rridu nahdmu iktar fuqha hija dik tat-twaqqif ta' skwadra speċjali fuq il-vjolenza domestika fil-qrati tal-gustizzja, biex il-maġistrati u l-imħallfin li jahdmu fuq dawn il-każi jkunu huma wkoll iffukati u mħarġa apposta biex jagħrfu jitrattaw b'iktar sensitività mal-kuplesità u s-sensittività tal-każijiet ta' vjolenza domestika. Hija qalet li fl-aħħar mill-aħħar qed nitrattaw mal-hajjiet ta' bnedmin li spiss idumu jsofru l-konsegwenzi ta' stejjer trawmatiki għal snin twal b'dannu

għal saħħithom.

“Sodisfazzjon kbir li iktar nies qed jiddeċiedu ma jibqgħux siekta”

Fl-ewwel sitt xhur tas-sena ġew irrappurtati 618-il każ ta' vjolenza domestika. Din iċ-ċifra turi zieda ta' 15% meta mqabbel mal-istess sitt xhur tas-sena ta' qabel. Friggieri tahseb li din iż-zieda hija sinjal li iktar nies qed jersqu għall-ghajnu, iktar qed ikollhom fiducja fis-servizzi professjonali offruti lilhom, forsi wkoll għax qed jinxtered dejjem iktar għarfien u edukazzjoni dwar in-natura tal-vjolenza domestika u l-vjolenza abbażi tal-ġeneru, kif ukoll dwar l-ghajnuniet offruti lil kull min ikun għaddej minn kwalunkwe forma ta' abbuż u vjolenza domestika.

“Għalina huwa ta' sodisfazzjon kbir li iktar nies qed jiddeċiedu li ma jibqgħux siekta u li bil-mod il-mod qed jtkisser it-tabù madwar is-sugġett tal-vjolenza domestika. Il-benesseri tas-soċjetà tagħna hija prijorità assoluta u bhala kummissjoni nheggu lin-nies biex jużaw is-servizzi b'xejn li qed joffri l-gvern u ma jibqgħux isofru fis-sket. L-abbuż u l-vjolenza fi kwalunkwe forma mhuma qatt u qatt aċċettabbli. Jhejtieg li nkompulu nahdmu b'dedikazzjoni u responsabbiltà għal soċjetà iktar hanina u ġusta li ttrispetta dejjem id-drittijiet fundamentali ta' kull bniedem,” temmet tghid Friggieri.



Photo: DOI - Omar Camilleri

Il-Kummissarju għall-vjolenza domestika tfahhar l-investiment għid tal-pulizija; sinjal qawwi ta' kemm qed nieħdu bis-serjetà dan il-fenomeni.

8.1.2 Discussions on television

Commissioner, Ms Audrey Friggieri, was also invited onto numerous television programmes to talk about the role of the Commission as well as raise awareness on the diverse forms of domestic violence.



Commissioner during television discussion



Commissioner on 'Ilsien in-Nisa'



Commissioner on 'RASIMBRAS'

Ms Friggieri maintained her visibility in the media during the COVID-19 crisis to raise awareness about the impact of the pandemic on persons affected by domestic violence as well as offer information to the public about the services available.



Commissioner on Stat ta' Fatt

8.1.3 Educational campaign on social media

On the 3rd June 2020, the Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence launched an educational campaign entitled #intkapaçi on its social media platforms where various local personalities were invited to share messages of empowerment to persons experiencing abuse and domestic violence. This campaign ran for three months and was relaunched in December 2020.

8.2 Participation in local conferences

Throughout the year, the Commission members and staff attended several local conferences both online and in person.



Commission members at a local conference



Commissioner at NCPE conference

8.3 Visit to Police Academy

In August 2020, Commissioner Audrey Friggieri together with Hon. Rosianne Cutajar visited the Police Academy in order to learn more about the newly launched simulator. This simulator is to be used in the training of police officers responding to reports of domestic violence.



Commissioner and Hon. Rosianne Cutajar at Ta' Kandja

Social Marketing

9

9.1 16 Days of Activism 2020

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign aimed at challenging violence against women and girls. The campaign runs every year from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day.

Every year, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign either introduces a new theme or addresses a previous theme. The theme focuses on a specific area of gender inequality and works to bring attention to these issues and make changes that will have an impact. The chosen theme by the UN for 2020 was "Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!"



United Nations logo

The Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence coordinated the 16 days of activism on a national level through collaboration with various government entities, NGOs and student organisations. The theme chosen locally for 2020 was 'Not every home is a haven – reach out for the life you deserve'.

Initiatives organised included awareness-raising campaigns on social media, radio and television. Moreover, the Commissioner was invited to participate in discussions on various television and radio programmes as well as on panels during conferences. The Commissioner visited domestic violence shelters and writing workshops were also held with residents.

A photography exhibition, displaying artwork related to the theme, was set up in the capital city. Another initiative involved primary and secondary schools where students were invited to submit drawings related to the following themes: 'You are not alone', 'Helping each other' and 'Not every home is a haven'.

In addition, several training sessions were organised for professionals working in the field of domestic violence.

9.1.1 Events all throughout the 16 days

Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence

- Social media campaign
- Radio campaign
- Airing of awareness-raising videos on TVM
- Photography exhibition – Valletta
- Drawing competition in Primary and Secondary schools in collaboration with the Ministry for Education and Employment

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

- Online campaign

Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability

- Photo collage on social media platforms

Victim Support Malta

- Online campaign about discrimination at the workplace and GBV

MCAST

- Online campaign
- Dissemination of posters, leaflets, business cards, promotional material to students

Żabbar Local Council

- Online campaign

National Theatre Company in collaboration with ŻiguŻajg Festival 20th Nov - 29th Nov

- 'Alice in Wonderless Land'

9.2 Calendar of Events

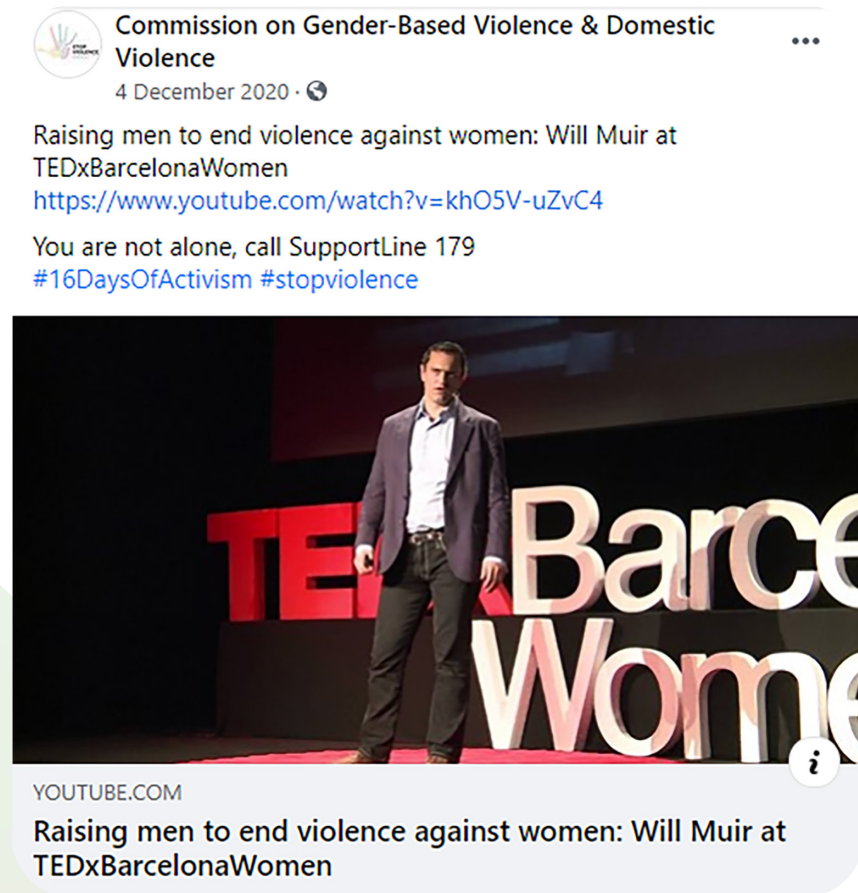
24/11/2020	25/11/2020	26/11/2020	27/11/2020	28/11/2020
<p>17:30 Lighting of Wignacourt Tower in orange Dr Lydia Abela</p>	<p>10:00 - 12:15 Conference 'Domestic violence: Unifying our Mission' with panel discussions FSWS</p> <p>10:00 - 12:00 Commission's participation in virtual round table on violence against women Faculty of Social Wellbeing</p> <p>13:00-16:30 Training for GPs delivered by Ms Maria Mangion & Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri</p> <p>19:30 Talk by Dr Christine Muscat Malta University Historical Society</p>	<p>10:00 - 12:00 Training for MCAST student mentors delivered by Ms Maria Mangion</p> <p>15:00 Commissioner on Radju Malta</p> <p>18:00 Commissioner's participation in a panel discussion on domestic violence Fondazzjoni iDEAT and Labour Party</p> <p>20:00 Online discussion led by Matthew Bartolo Betapsi</p>	<p>14:30-16:00 Training for Legal Aid lawyers delivered by Ms Maria Mangion</p> <p>14:00 Writing workshops Delivered by Miriam Calleja Għabex</p> <p>9:00 - 13:00 Commissioner's presentation during 'Sustainability issues in times of unprecedented uncertainty: Towards a sustainable society'</p> <p>17:00 Commissioner on 'Illum ma Steph' TVM</p>	<p>9:00am - 10:30am Commissioner on ONE Radio</p> <p>10:00 Writing workshops delivered by Miriam Calleja Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu'</p>

30/11/2020	1/12/2020	2/12/2020	3/12/2020	4/12/2020
<p>13:30-15:00 Training for Probation Officers delivered by Ms Maria Mangion</p> <p>21:00 Online awareness raising campaign on minor abuse European Studies Organisation</p> <p>Commissioner on 'Follow-Up' ONE TV</p>	<p>Online awareness raising campaign on minor abuse European Studies Organisation</p>	<p>11:30 Visit to Dar Merħba Bik & Dar Santa Bahkita by Hon. Rosianne Cutajar & Commissioner Audrey Friggieri</p>	<p>11:00 Commissioner on 'TVAM' PBS</p> <p>Visit to Dar Għabex by Hon. Rosianne Cutajar & Commissioner Audrey Friggieri</p>	<p>14:30 Afternoon tea organised by Dr Lydia Abela Villa Arrigo</p> <p>19:30 Dinjita' Fashion Show Ministry for Gozo</p>
<p>5/12/2020</p> <p>10:00 - 12:00 Commissioner on 'Għandi xi Nghid' 103 Malta's Heart</p>	<p>7/12/2020</p> <p>10:00 - 13:00 Multi-agency training on elderly abuse delivered by Prof. Trish Hafford-Lethfield</p>	<p>9/12/2020</p> <p>15:00 Visit to Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu' by Hon. Rosianne Cutajar & Commissioner Audrey Friggieri</p> <p>21:15 Commissioner on 'Familji ta' Għada' Radju Malta 93.7 FM</p>	<p>10/12/2020</p> <p>11:00 Commissioner's participation in panel discussion Human Rights Directorate</p> <p>12:00 Commissioner's participation in panel discussion MCAST</p>	

9.3 Awareness Raising Initiatives

9.3.1 Social media

During the 16 days of activism, the Commission developed a campaign on social media including videos and information material covering several topics related to gender-based violence and domestic violence. A series of Ted Talks were posted daily throughout the 16 days, along with informative posts and other awareness raising video material.



Posts on social media

9.3.2 Radio adverts

Six radio awareness-raising clips, in both Maltese and English languages, were aired on various local radio stations during the 16 days of activism as part of the Commission's awareness raising campaign.

9.3.3 Television adverts

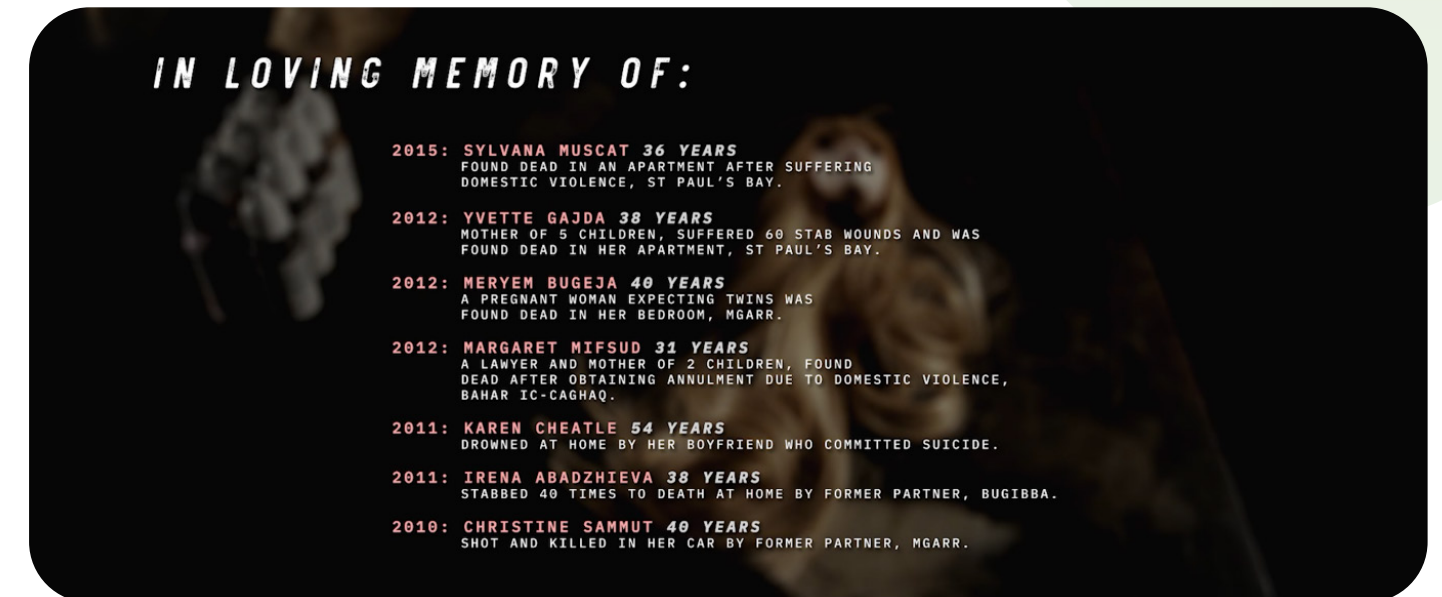
Three television awareness-raising video clips were also aired on the National Television Station during a very prominent television show.

9.3.4 Video with Teatru Malta

The Commission, in collaboration with Teatru Malta, developed a lyric video production featuring the theme song from an interactive play produced by Teatru Malta for Ziguzajg entitled 'Alice in Wonderless Land'. The video aims to pay tribute to all women who lost their lives due to domestic violence.



Video produced in collaboration with Teatru Malta



Video produced in collaboration with Teatru Malta

9.4 Training for Professionals

9.4.1 Services, signs of domestic violence and the effect on children

The Commission organised generic training for GPs and medical practitioners, delivered by Ms. Maria Mangion and Dr. Clarissa Sammut Scerri, in order to inform them about the existing services in the field to be able to refer victims of domestic violence to the appropriate entity. GPs were also prepared on how to identify various signs of domestic violence in order to sensitise themselves towards patients experiencing domestic violence. Moreover, the training focused on the effect domestic violence has on children.

9.4.2 Types of violence and services

The Commission also organized a training session for MCAST student mentors in order to better inform them on how they can help victims. They were given an extensive overview of the different types of violence which need to be considered apart from physical violence. Furthermore, information about the existing services for victims of domestic violence was provided.

9.4.3 Calling home a safe space

Legal Aid lawyers were provided with training on the social aspect rather than legal aspects, with a specific focus on interventions with perpetrators. This training session was delivered by Ms Maria Mangion.

9.4.4 Safer families, safer society

The Commission organised another training session for Probation Officers in relation to understanding the perpetrator in order to protect families, which was delivered by Ms. Maria Mangion.

9.4.5 Elderly Abuse

The Commission organised a specialized training course on elderly abuse which was delivered by Professor Trish Hafford-Letchfield. Social workers, health care professionals, probation officers and legal aid amongst others were invited to attend, in order to create further awareness and sensitisation amongst professionals towards an existing reality which most often is not identified and given the importance it deserves.

9.5 Activities and events

9.5.1 Photography Competition

The Commission organised a photography competition as part of our awareness raising campaign in view of the International Campaign: 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence. Our chosen theme for this year is: Mhux kull dar toffri kenn – Hájja aħjar tibda minnek (Not every home is a haven – Reach out for the life you deserve). The top ten photographs, chosen by a panel of expert judges in collaboration with the Malta Institute of Professional Photography, were exhibited in Valletta from 25th November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, until 10th December, Human Rights Day.



Photography exhibition in Valletta



Photography exhibition

9.5.2 Drawing Competition

Through this initiative, the Commission wanted to raise awareness about gender-based violence and domestic violence among students of all ages. As part of the activities, the Commission invited students to participate in a drawing competition about the topic of 'gender-based violence and domestic violence'. The Commission focused on positive themes in order to inspire children to submit drawings that reflect how they perceive healthy and happy families. The two chosen themes for the primary schools were 'You are not alone' and 'Helping each other', while for the secondary schools the theme was 'Not every home is a haven'.

9.5.3 Writing workshops

During the 16 days of activism, the Commission organised writing workshops in collaboration with poet Miriam Calleja with residents in shelters Dar Għabex and Dar Qalb ta Ġesu, in order to encourage victims of domestic violence to express their emotions through writing, which is a form of personal expression considered to be therapeutic for individuals who have experienced trauma.

9.6 Participation in the media

Commissioner Audrey Friggieri was invited to participate in a number of television and radio programmes on different media stations throughout the 16 days of activism, to discuss matters related to domestic violence and gender-based violence, whilst raising awareness about the topics and the 16 days of activism amongst the general public.

9.6.1 Television

- “Illum ma Steph” (PBS) on 27/11/2020.
- “Follow up” (One TV) on 30/11/2020.
- “TVAM” PBS on 3/12/2020.

9.6.2 Radio

- Radju Malta on 26/11/2020 15:00.
- One Radio on 28/11/2020 9:00.
- ‘Għandi xi Nghid’ (103 Malta’s Heart) on 5/12/2020.

9.7 Participation in panel discussions

The Commission participated in several conferences and panel discussions, including “Domestic Violence: Unifying our Mission” organised by the FSWS and “Virtual Round Table on Violence Against Women” on 25th November. On 26th November, the Commissioner participated in a panel discussion on domestic violence, organised by Fondazzjoni Ideat and the Labour Party. The Commissioner also participated in a panel discussion organised by the Human Rights Directorate and another one organised by MCAST, both held on Human Rights Day (10th December) to mark the closing of the 16 days of activism awareness-raising campaign.



Event organized by FSWS



Panel discussion organised by HRD



Panel discussion organised by MCAST

9.8 Other Initiatives

On the first day of the 16 days of Activism, the Commissioner participated in the lighting of Wignacourt Tower in bright orange, a colour that represents domestic violence awareness, as a symbolic act, along with other watch towers around Malta, Gozo and Comino. The colour orange has also been chosen in view of the International chosen theme for 2020: “Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!”. The symbolic representation of the watchtowers, which were once used to protect the islands, is indeed the need for everyone to keep an eye out and identify if someone is in need of help.



Lighting of watch towers to raise awareness about domestic violence

The Commissioner embarked on several initiatives during the campaign, including visits to a number of shelters for victims of domestic violence, namely: Dar Merħba Bik, Dar Santa Bahkita, Dar Għabex and Dar Qalb ta’ Ġesu, accompanied by the Parliamentary Secretary, Hon. Rosianne Cutajar.

In addition, the members and staff of the Commission attended several events organised by different entities and organisations during the 16 days of activism.

10

Measures and practices during the COVID-19 pandemic

10.1 Service provision

During the COVID-19 partial lockdown period, the Maltese Government was committed to continue the delivery of services for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence. National services and services offered by NGOs needed to alter their service delivery.

In response to the restrictive measures ordered by the Superintendent of Public health on the 16th March 2020, safety precautions had to be introduced which brought about a shift from face-to-face interventions to phone and online contact to ensure the continued delivery of support services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictive measures ordered also resulted in the closure of the Courts of Justice. Nevertheless, the Courts were given the power to order the hearing of urgent cases which included cases of domestic violence. Moreover, risk assessments were still carried out by the social workers at the police stations when a person filed a domestic violence report at the district stations. Alternatively, risk assessments were also carried online to ensure preventive and safety measures were adhered to.

Thus, during the partial lockdown period, that is, between March and June 2020, government entities and NGOs working in the field of GBV and DV ensured that while abiding by safety measures, services were still made available to those seeking help.

10.2 New services

In order to address the heightened risk for victims of domestic violence who were trapped indoors with their abusers, new services were launched. The Legal Aid Agency introduced legal assistance specifically for victims of domestic violence. Moreover, The Ministry for Social Accommodation extended its Private Rent Housing Benefit Scheme to victims of domestic violence, thus giving them the opportunity to leave their homes as opposed to remaining confined with their perpetrators.

In addition, several government entities and non-governmental organisations launched helplines to broaden the support available to victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence during the partial lockdown period. Helplines were set up by the Ministry for Education and Employment, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services, the Mental Health Services and the Women's Rights Foundation.

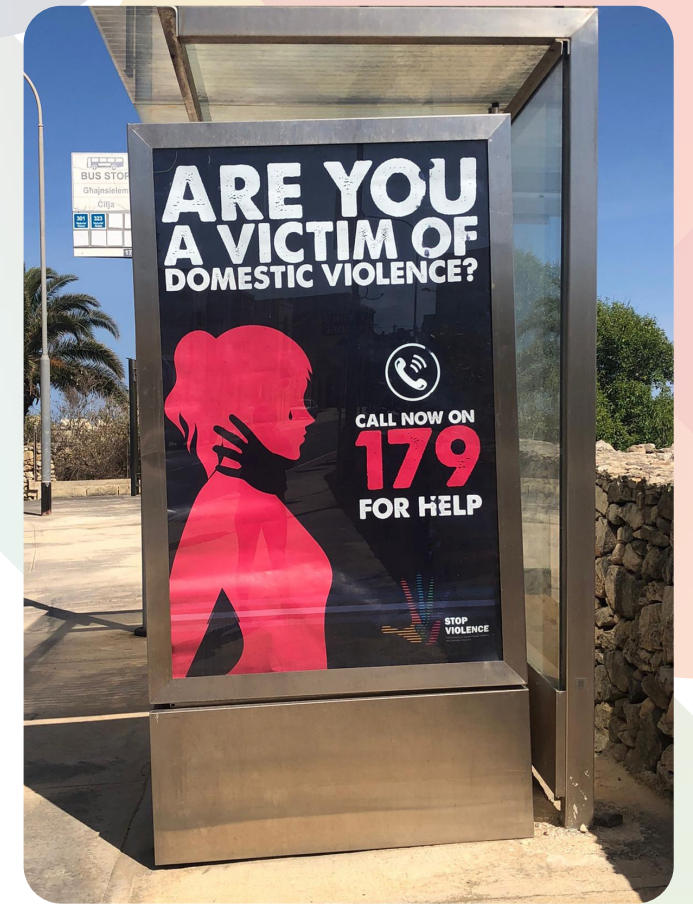
10.3 Awareness-raising

National awareness-raising campaigns were coordinated by the Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence through the dissemination of informative material such as posters, leaflets, and business cards with the contact numbers of service providers to pharmacies, supermarkets, grocers, banks, local councils, police stations and healthcare centres across Malta and Gozo. Radio clips with informative messages were also aired on several radio stations as part of the 'COVID awareness raising campaign'.

Furthermore, through the EU co-funded project 'Breaking the Cycle of Violence', the Commission also coordinated a campaign with messages in various languages to be used on bus shelters across Malta and Gozo. Since social media usage had drastically increased during this time, the campaign was mainly focused on online sources and opted for online newspapers as its medium. Two messages were identified:

"Are you a victim of domestic violence?
Call now on 179 for help."

"Asking for help does not make you weak. Make the call on 179 for help."



Bus shelter campaign



Messages in different languages

Through another EU co-funded project, 'GBV-SO Improving Support Structures for Victims of Gender-Based Violence', the Commission in collaboration with SOS Malta and Victim Support Malta created several posters to address gender-based violence and domestic violence during the COVID-19 situation. The aim of this campaign was to raise awareness about how homes might not be safe for all during the partial lockdown period and thus encouraging persons experiencing abuse to seek help and report. These posters were translated into different languages including Maltese, English, Italian, Serbian and French. The campaign also targeted bystanders such as neighbours, relatives and co-workers to take a stand and not turn a blind eye to violence.

Various awareness raising campaigns have also helped in spreading information and knowledge on services as well as to pass on the message of zero tolerance to violence.

Financial Overview

Commission on Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence Vote 5477

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

<i>Communication</i>	€492.00
<i>Office furniture</i>	€471.00
Total Amount	€963.00

CORPORATE RUNNING COSTS

<i>Rent and maintenance fees</i>	€31,507.62
<i>Honoraria of members</i>	€12,632.53
<i>Local Transport</i>	€4,070.62
<i>Annual Subscriptions</i>	€355.48
<i>General Expenses</i>	€17,277.59
Total Amount	€65,843.84

TRAVEL EXPENSES	€2,444.96
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PROFESSIONAL SERVICES <i>(Contract for Services)</i>	€31,072.70
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TOTAL EXPENDITURE	€100,324.50
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Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy Vote 5246

AWARENESS RAISING <i>(Promotional Material & Campaigns)</i>	€19,826.22
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EDUCATION & TRAINING	€2,761.50
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RESEARCH	€5,510.41
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TOTAL EXPENDITURE	
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Total Annual Amount for 2020	€128,442.63
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COMMISSION SALARIES FOR 2020	€130,855.16
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Side Note:

· This financial overview is an estimate of the Commission's expenses and does not reflect the exact amount of expenses in 2020.





Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence



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