

Annual Report

2022

COMMISSION ON
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



**STOP
VIOLENCE**

Commission on Gender-based Violence
and Domestic Violence

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Message from the Parliamentary Secretary



As we reflect on the work of the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence (CGBVDV) over the past year, it is clear that progress has been made towards achieving our shared goal of ending all forms of gender-based violence and domestic violence in Malta.

During the early days of this new legislative period, one of my top priorities as Parliamentary Secretary was to work on a manifesto measure aimed at providing a more effective tool to prevent cases of domestic violence from occurring. The proposed law will allow persons to check whether their intimate partner has been found guilty of committing domestic violence in the past. The fundamental principle behind this law is to equip individuals with comprehensive information, thereby empowering them to make informed and well-considered decisions. In this way, we aim to help break the cycle of violence and prevent individuals from staying in potentially abusive relationships.

Another notable accomplishment is the commissioning of a prevalence study on childhood experiences of abuse, including exposure to domestic violence. This study, titled 'Safety in Childhood: A Prevalence Study of Childhood Abuse Experiences in Malta', was conducted by the Department of Child and Family Studies at the University of Malta. This study provides critical insights into the prevalence and nature of these experiences, which will serve as guidance when implementing future policy and programming in this area.

The successful implementation of the 'Safe Dates' teen relationship abuse prevention programme, was also an important development this year. This pilot project, which was carried out in collaboration with the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, was conducted in four

secondary state schools with Year 10 students during PSCD lessons. This project represents an important step towards preventing gender-based violence and domestic violence by equipping young people with the skills and knowledge they need to build healthy relationships.

The CGBVDV has also continued to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the second National Action Plan (2021-2022) through regular meetings with the Inter-Ministerial Committee. In addition, the Commission staff initiated preparatory work on the drafting of the third National Strategy and Action Plan. These efforts demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that Malta remains at the forefront of efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and domestic violence.

Throughout 2022, the CGBVDV has worked to raise awareness and build capacity through various training programmes, awareness-raising campaigns and commemoration of important international days. Subsequently, five comprehensive rounds of multi-agency training for professionals have been conducted. This training was attended by a total of 119 professionals from a variety of sectors. Additionally, the Commission successfully organised several awareness-raising campaigns which were designed to shed light on critical topics such as sexual violence, violence prevention, and the unique experiences of migrants.

As we move forward, the Government's commitment to building on these accomplishments and striving towards our shared goal of eradicating all forms of gender-based and domestic violence in Malta is stronger than ever. We look forward to working with all stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to achieve this important goal.

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Foreword by the **Outgoing Commissioner**



This marks my third year as Commissioner on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence. From the outset, this role has been a challenge, a responsibility and a privilege.

The role is challenging because it involves handling complex issues, addressing harsh realities in people's lives, and working collaboratively with all relevant service providers and professionals. The role carries immense responsibility because it necessitates that one dedicates nothing short of best efforts to every facet of this sensitive issue. It is a privilege because it provides the opportunity to make a difference, to contribute to the state's effort to safeguard the well-being of families, individuals, communities and society as a whole.

Each year has brought me into contact with different people, situations and challenges. These experiences come with learning curves that are integral to infusing more humanity, resilience and understanding into the mission of working in the field of domestic violence and gender-based violence.

This was another busy year for the Commission, one that has brought us closer to important stakeholders with whom we collaborate on implementing the National Strategy on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence. I am especially proud of our collaboration with the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, which has facilitated the introduction of a teen programme about dating safely as a pilot project in four state colleges. The aim is to implement it in the national curriculum after its impact has been thoroughly evaluated. This evaluation consists of a pre- and post-test among participating students and focus groups with PSCD educators. We look forward to the presentation of these results this coming year.

The Commission also met school principals to raise awareness about the unique experiences of students who come from abusive homes and violent situations. We emphasized the importance of ensuring these students are appropriately supported, enabling their ongoing participation in school to proceed as smoothly as possible. This meeting led to further meetings with guidance teachers across Malta and Gozo, as well as school visits and presentations by the Commissioner, professionals and frontliners from the Police GBDV unit, the Human Rights Directorate, and Aġenzija Appoġġ to school academic staff and leadership teams. The Commission further introduced a component on domestic violence issues into teachers' COPE sessions, and will pursue the implementation of professional development training about domestic violence and gender-based violence for journalists and the judiciary throughout 2023. Meanwhile, the Commission continued to provide five multi-agency training sessions for professionals and frontliners during the year.

One of the Commission's most important missions is Prevention, which encompasses various aspects of education and training, including utilizing of the media's diverse platforms for our awareness-raising campaigns. This year we spearheaded two important campaigns focusing on (i) preventing sexual violence: 'Consent Matters: Stop Sexual Violence', and (ii) migrants' experiences of gender-based violence and domestic violence: 'All Humans have Dignity: RESPECT. PROTECT.' The Commission also convened a national conference aimed at engaging men and boys in violence prevention. This initiative was designed to confront the enduring issue of societal patriarchy, which is the underlying cause of inequality and discrimination against women. The conference provided a platform for dialogue and debate among various stakeholders

and professionals, including presentations from international experts.

Further campaigns were planned for the 16 Days of Activism, where we invited all stakeholders in society to join us in our activism against gender-based violence. It is with a sad and heavy heart that I remember the killing of Bernice Cassar at this time. All endeavours pale at such a tragedy and the days of activism were overshadowed by the shocking murder of yet another woman. However, within my sadness and anger, a resolve was kindled – stronger than ever – to press forward and enact meaningful change. Together, we need to be better. We have to protect women better. We have to protect families better. We need more resources to fight the monster of domestic violence. We must not let it win. We *can* do this.

One of the highlights of this year’s International 16 Days of Activism was the roundtable discussion on engaging men and boys in violence prevention. This discussion aimed to stimulate more debate around the subject of equality and generate policy recommendations to combat domestic and gender-based violence. We were privileged to have Dr. Declan Coogan from the University of Galway, Ireland, as our keynote speaker. Dr. Coogan shared his extensive experience of working with young offenders with the various professionals and stakeholders present. This exchange helped us gain

a better understanding of the male perspective in handling adversity and relationships. After all, we are products of our upbringing within society, which unfortunately remains gendered, affecting different genders unequally and contributing to discrimination, gender-based abuse and domestic violence.

Violence in the home impacts the whole family, including children who witness it and who bear its traumatic effects for years to come. Recognizing the significance and sensitivity of this phenomenon, and considering the lack of data about it in Malta, the Commission commissioned dedicated research to address this gap. The study, which was conducted by researchers from the Department of Child and Family Studies at the Faculty for Social Wellbeing, University of Malta, focused on the prevalence rate of children witnessing domestic violence and the prevalence rate of other forms of abuse.

It has been an eventful year indeed. I am grateful for the shared commitment among all stakeholders, the trust which was bestowed upon me and the Commission, and the collaboration with the numerous entities the Commission works with. I am proud of our achievements too. The challenge is always to achieve more. To help more. To be more effective in bringing about social justice. This requires us to be flexible and determined, working diligently together to overcome obstacles and effect the changes we aspire to see in our society and the world.

Audrey Friggieri
Outgoing Commissioner



Foreword by the **Commissioner**



As I embark on this new journey, I reflect on a lifetime of personal and professional experiences that will enable me to empathize with those who are most effected by gender-based and domestic abuse, and violence against women; while also ensuring that through leadership and strategic planning towards a shift in mindsets, we as a society address the pains brought about by this societal challenge.

During the past years, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence has invested in several research projects and awareness raising efforts. These are essential to understanding where we stand and where we want to go. It is now our responsibility to ensure that findings and recommendations are implemented by the respective entities.

One of my priorities will be to strengthen the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence, to reach out to different target groups and widen discussions with different stakeholders. Different platforms bring together key partners in the fight against violence. These platforms will further promote collaboration between entities and non-governmental organizations, primarily focusing on breaking the cycle of violence.

As individuals we are raised within a culture, which perpetuates patriarchy and misogyny. As a result, we become part of that society. It is therefore important that we address underlying societal norms and values that encourage superiority of one person over another based on one's beliefs, while also promoting self-confidence and esteem amongst those who continue to find themselves in situations where someone else exhibits power and control over them.

It is therefore within the Commission's obligation to adopt a whole family approach, whereby victims, being those who are directly abused or those who

witness violence, are provided the necessary support, and perpetrators carry responsibility for their actions while engaging in rehabilitative programmes.

Intersectionality will remain an essential approach to my work within the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence. Age, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs, social origin and ethnic background matter when discussing gender-based and domestic abuse. Thus, the promotion of accessibility of services and reasonable accommodations will endure.

As Commissioner on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence, I will therefore commit to take on an inclusive, pro-active approach to highlight the need for systematic changes that will empower victims of these crimes to come forward, while promoting a whole family approach in the process of seeking support.

Samantha Pace Gasan

Commissioner

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Magenta lines

01 The Commission

In line with Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence monitors the implementation of said Convention at a national level. Its set-up, remit, functions, and legal obligations are fully determined by Chapter 581 of the Laws of Malta, otherwise known as the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act.

The Commission's main responsibilities include:

- advising the Minister and state institutions on all issues relating to gender-based violence and domestic violence, including the measures deemed necessary to ensure conformity with the Convention and Chapter 581;
- monitoring and overseeing the effective implementation of the concurrent National Strategy and Action Plan on gender-based violence and domestic violence by sustaining coordination and networking among all relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations;
- supporting research in the field of gender-based violence and domestic violence;
- monitoring national standards for support services for victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence and domestic violence;
- organising specialised training for field professionals in line with the annual training needs analysis;
- assisting in the comprehensive collection of relevant statistical data at regular intervals from the State, public sector, agencies and other relevant entities;
- collaborating with relevant national institutions in conducting population-based surveys to assess the prevalence of, and trends in, all forms of

violence covered by the Convention and Chapter 581;

- providing the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) with information in order to stimulate international cooperation and enable international benchmarking;
- disseminating information about the Commission's activities, about measures available to prevent acts of violence and about available means of redress with the general public;
- conducting awareness-raising campaigns on a regular basis to increase understanding among the general public of the different manifestations of all forms of gender-based violence and domestic violence and the need to prevent and address such violence;
- collaborating with educational authorities to educate students on the forms of violence covered by the Convention and Chapter 581 and the preventive measures in their regard;
- to provide guidelines to the media in relation to the prevention of the forms of violence covered by the Convention and Chapter 581.

1.1 Members of the Commission

The Commission is headed by a Chairperson and twelve board members together with a board secretary.

Chairperson: Ms Audrey Friggieri

Board members:

- Dr Cheryl Azzopardi
- Ms Marika Tonna
- Ms Catherine Fenech
- Insp. Louise Calleja
- Ms Antonella Rogers
- Dr Charles Cassar
- Dr Bryony Balzia Bartolo
- Mr Christian Camilleri
- Ms Renee Laiviera
- Dr Alessia Psaila Zammit
- Ms Sarah Haider

Board secretary: Ms Pearl Agius

Staff members:

- Ms Sasha Na Jeong Farrugia
- Ms Maria Farrugia
- Ms Maria Borg
- Ms Therese Caruana
- Mr Nicholas Saliba



02 Commission Meetings

Three board meetings were held in the first quarter of 2022.

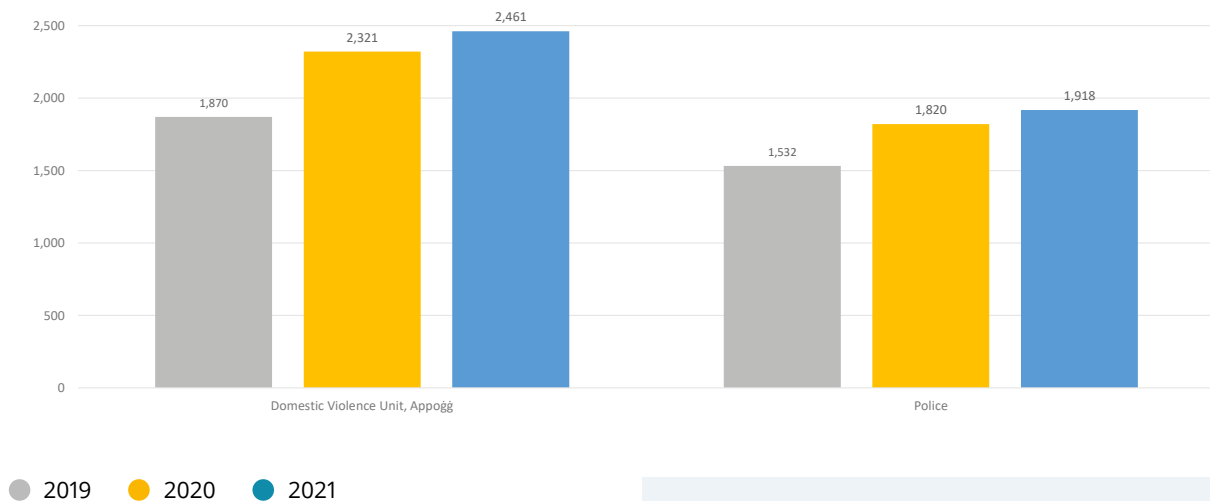
Meeting 1	6 January
Meeting 2	3 February
Meeting 3	3 March

A new Commission board was appointed in October 2022 and the first meeting was held on 9 November. The Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg attended this initial meeting. A second meeting was convened by the Chairperson on 12 December.

03 Research and Statistical Reporting

The National Statistics Office gathers data on gender-based violence and domestic violence from various service providers, both governmental and non-governmental, on behalf of the Commission every year. This data is then harmonized and presented in the Commission's Annual Report.

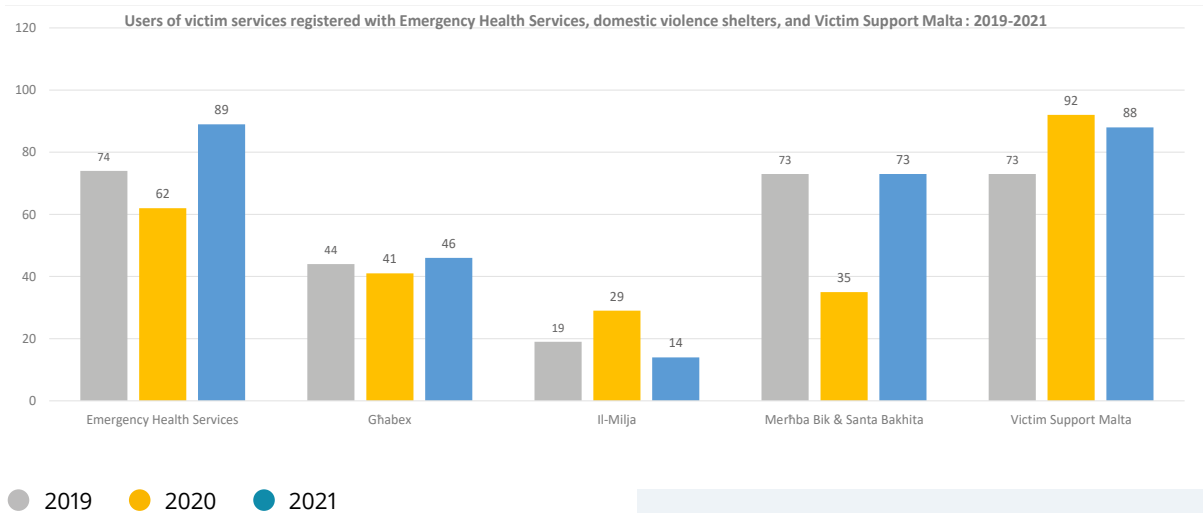
3.1 Users of victim services registered with Appogg and the Police: 2019–2021



Note:

- Total figures represent the number of cases registered at the respective service. Persons accessing services multiple times feature more than once.

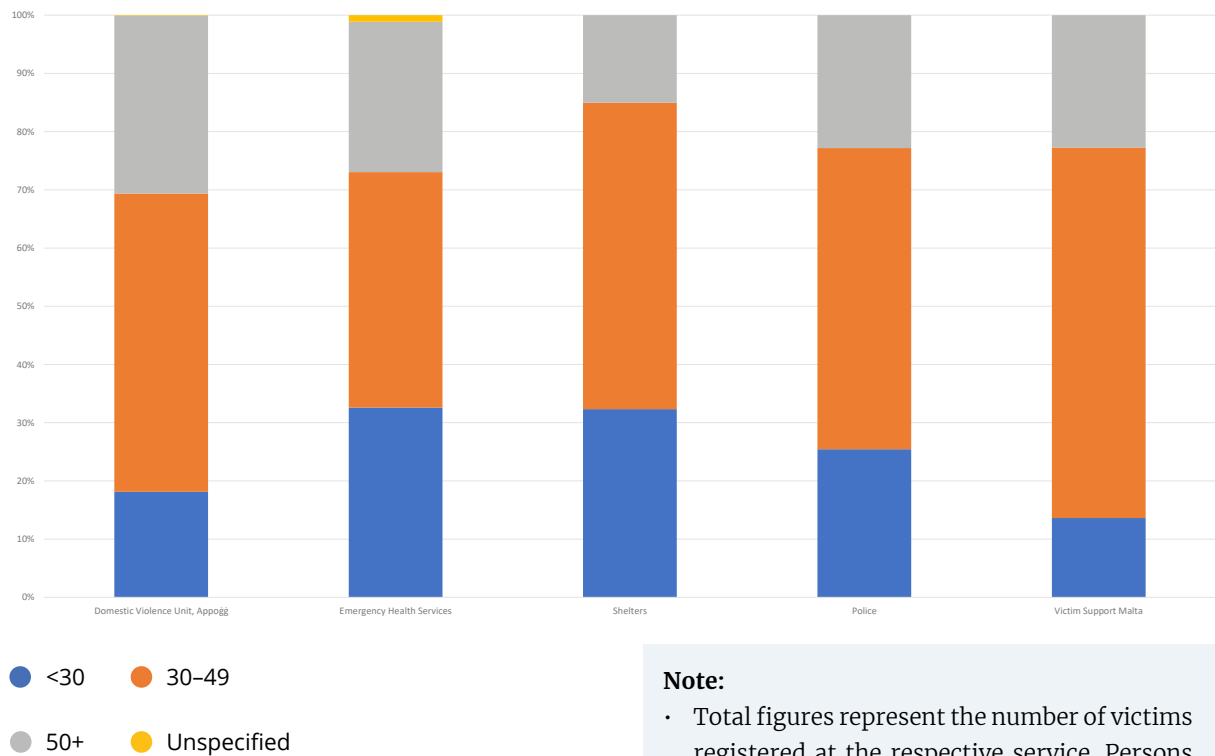
3.2 Users of victim services registered with Emergency Health Services, domestic violence shelters and Victim Support Malta: 2019–2021



Note:

- Total figures represent the number of cases registered at the respective service. Persons accessing services multiple times feature more than once.

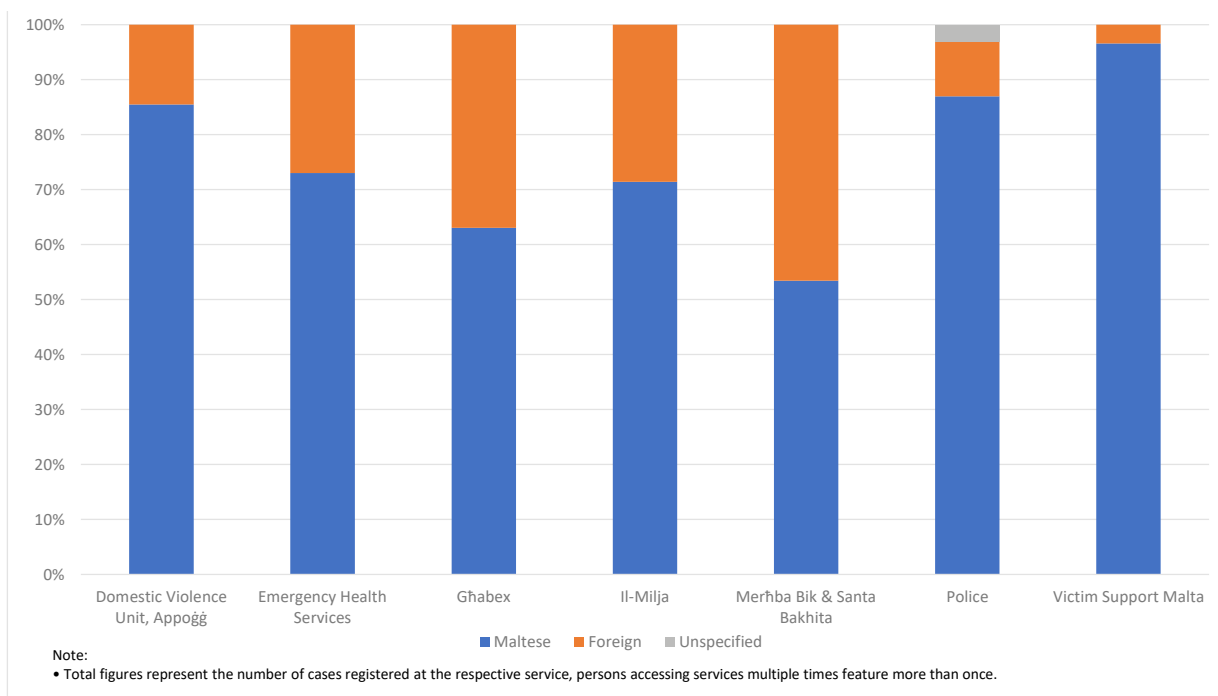
3.3 Users of victim services by domestic violence services and age group: 2021



Note:

- Total figures represent the number of victims registered at the respective service. Persons accessing different services or the same service multiple times are counted more than once.

3.4 Percentage distribution of cases registered using domestic violence services by broad nationality of service user: 2021

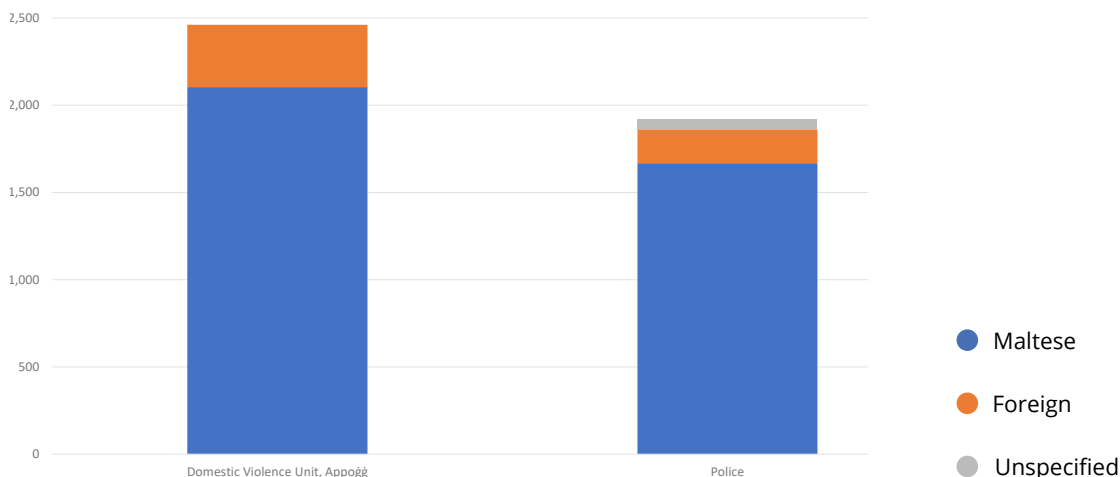


● Maltese ● Foreign ● Unspecified

Note:

• Total figures represent the number of cases registered at the respective service. Persons accessing services multiple times feature more than once.

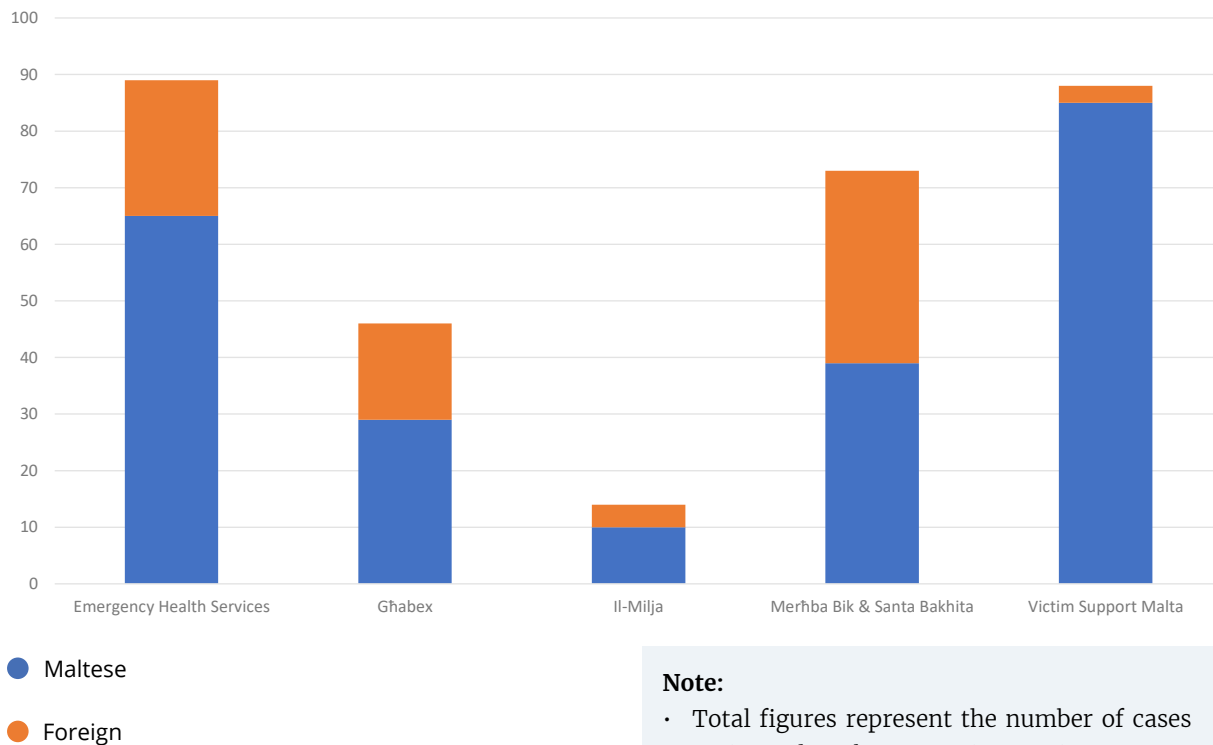
3.5 Cases registered with Appoġġ and the Police by broad nationality of service user: 2021



Note:

• Total figures represent the number of cases registered at the respective service. Persons accessing services multiple times feature more than once.

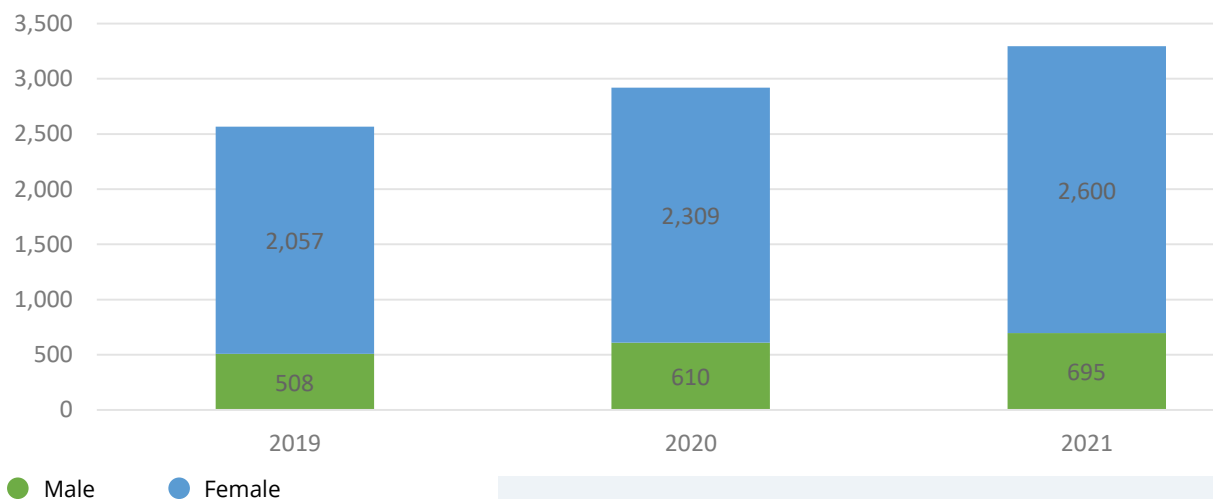
3.6 Cases registered with Emergency Health Services, domestic violence shelters, and Victim Support Malta by broad nationality of service user: 2021



Note:

- Total figures represent the number of cases registered at the respective service. Persons accessing services multiple times feature more than once.

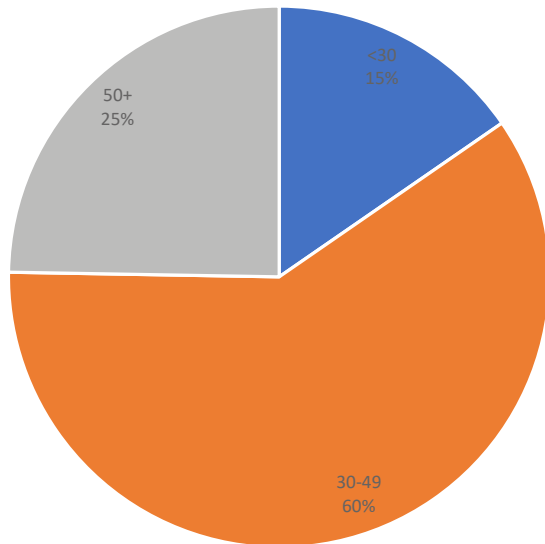
3.7 Total number of persons using domestic violence services by gender of service user: 2019 – 2021



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.
- Services included: Merħba Bik, Santa Bakhita, Il-Milja, Domestic Violence Unit (Appoġġ), Victim Support Malta (2019, 2021), Police, Ghabex and the Emergency Health Services.

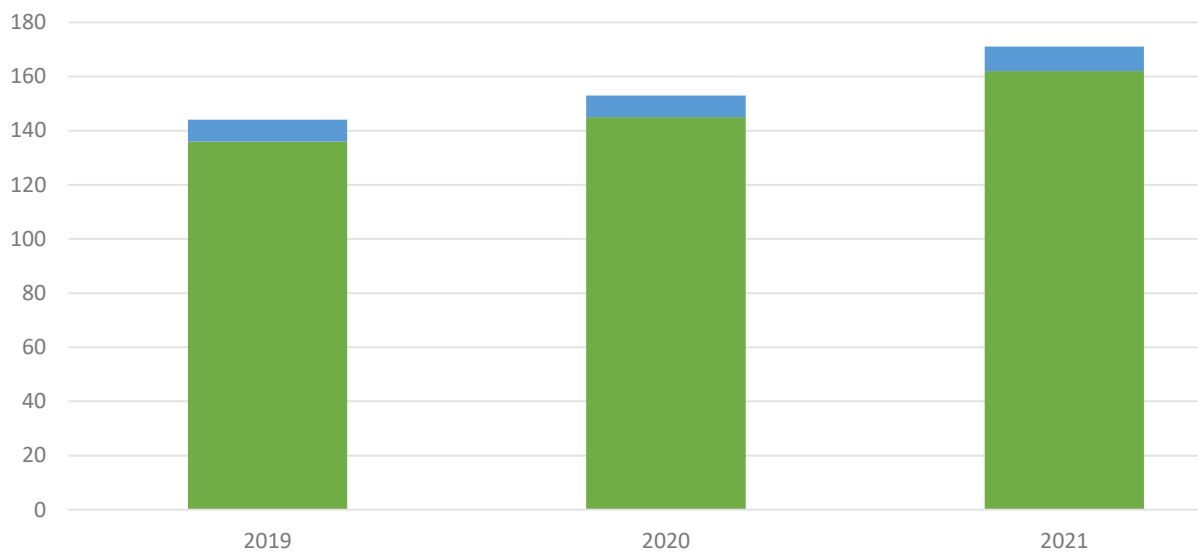
3.8 Users of perpetrator services registered at domestic violence services by age of service user: 2021



Note:

- Domestic violence services targeting perpetrators consists of the ‘Stop!’ 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.

3.9 Total number of persons using services for perpetrators by gender of service user: 2019 – 2021



● Male ● Female

Notes:

- Domestic violence services targeting perpetrators includes the ‘Stop!’ programme and the Department of Probation and Parole.
- 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.

04

Implementation of Budget Measure: **‘Safety in Childhood – A Prevalence Study of Childhood Abuse Experiences in Malta’**

Throughout 2022, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence was engaged in the completion of an additional budget measure: a prevalence study of childhood experiences of abuse, including children’s exposure to domestic violence. The research process was entrusted to the Department of Child and Family Studies within



Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri & Dr Ingrid Lanfranco at the launch event

the Faculty for Social Wellbeing at the University of Malta. The research team was led by Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri and included Dr Ingrid Grech Lanfranco, Ms Lara Pace and Ms Maria Borg.

The primary objective of the study was to determine the prevalence of individuals who witnessed domestic violence and experienced other forms of abuse during their childhood. The collected quantitative data also encompass rates of polyvictimisation, frequencies of abuse



Commissioner Audrey Friggieri at launch event

and relationships with the perpetrators. As the first study of its kind, this research illuminates pressing issues that affect younger generations and contributes to informed service provision and policy development in the areas of domestic violence and child abuse.

Using a quantitative research design and a retrospective approach, results were obtained through a representative sample of 18–24-year-old individuals residing in Malta. The study, launched on 28 February 2022, collected data through pre-set online questionnaires until a representative sample size was achieved. The study was concluded in December 2022, when the final report was presented to the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence and to the Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality. The results are expected to be disseminated among the public during a national conference on the project to be held in 2023.





Implementation of Pilot Project on **Dating Violence Prevention in Collaboration with the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation**

During the first four months of 2022, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence, in collaboration with the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, implemented a pilot project titled, 'A Pilot Study Evaluating the Implementation of 'Safe Dates' – a Teen Relationship Abuse Prevention Programme'. This programme was piloted with Year 10 students during PSCD lessons. The main objective of the pilot study was to evaluate whether the implementation of the 'Safe Dates' programme effectively alters students' beliefs and attitudes

about dating abuse, and to collect feedback from PSCD teachers regarding the programme's implementation.

The lead researcher, Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri from the Department of Child and Family Studies within the University of Malta, together with the Commission team, conducted focus groups with the PSCD teachers who implemented the programme between March and June.

06

Stakeholder Meetings and Training

6.1 Presentation of Annual Report 2021

On 6 June, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg and Commissioner Audrey Friggieri presented the Commission's Annual Report, highlighting the work carried out by the Commission throughout 2021, in a media event held at the University of Malta in Valletta.

6.2 Meeting with the Permanent Committee for Social Affairs

On 18 July 2022, Commissioner Audrey Friggieri met with the Permanent Committee for Social Affairs at the Parliament of Malta to present the Commission's Annual Report for the year 2021.

6.3 Meeting with Heads of College Network

On 12 September, the Commission was invited to attend a meeting with directors and Heads of College Networks to give an overview of the work carried out by the Commission, with a particular focus on preventive initiatives such as the organisation of training for professionals, including educators and awareness-raising activities.

6.4 Meeting with Heads of Schools

The Commission attended a Council of Heads meeting at San Ġorġ Preca College on 10 November to give a presentation about its role as coordinating body and its ongoing work in the area of gender-based violence and domestic violence. Professionals from the GBDV Unit within the Malta Police Force and the Domestic Violence Services within Aġenzija Appoġġ were invited to provide information about their services and support offered to persons experiencing violence.



Commission members with the Heads of Schools

6.5 Training for professionals

In January, a training needs analysis was carried out with the Inter-Ministerial Committee. The majority of stakeholders underscored the need for multi-agency training, specifically targeting new recruits and professionals who have received minimal training on gender-based violence and domestic violence.

6.5.1 Multi-agency training on gender-based violence and domestic violence

During 2022, the Commission coordinated five rounds of multi-agency training for professionals, which were delivered in April, May, June, October and November. Each training session was held in person over two days at The Academy for Disciplined Forces at Ta' Kandja. The Commission invited representatives from NGOs working directly in the field to deliver the training programme, which was based on the training material developed under the 'Full Cooperation: Zero Violence' EU-funded project. The NGOs included Women's Rights Foundation, Men Against Violence, Fondazzjoni Sebħ and Victim Support Malta.



Mr Karl Grech delivering a training session



Professionals at the multi-agency training at Ta' Kandja

Participants included professionals from the GBDV Unit within the Malta Police Force, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services, the Ministry for Health, the National School Support Services, the Department of Probation and Parole, Legal Aid Malta, Victim Support Agency, the Human Rights Directorate and NGOs working in the field of gender-based violence and domestic violence. A total of 119 professionals attended the five training sessions.

Minister Byron Camilleri and Parliamentary Secretary Rebecca Buttigieg attended the training session held on 21 October to meet with the trainers and professionals.



Hon. Camilleri & Hon. Buttigieg at Ta' Kandja

6.5.2 National guidance meetings

In October, the Commission was invited to present at three national guidance meetings about its role as the national coordinating body under the Istanbul Convention and the various forms of gender-based violence and domestic violence. The Commission also involved speakers from the Human Rights Directorate to provide an overview of national law, and from Aġenzija Appoġġ to explain the services available.

6.5.3 COPE session with educators

On 2 December, the Commission coordinated the delivery of a COPE session titled 'Self-Awareness for Educators on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence' at San Ġwann Primary School. The session was led by representatives from Victim Support Malta and Fondazzjoni Sebħ. A total of 104 educators participated in the session, which included primary school teachers, learning support educators, kindergarten educators and peripatetic staff.



Implementation of the National Action Plan and Monitoring of GREVIO Recommendations

7.1 Implementation of the National Action Plan

Throughout 2022, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence held regular meetings with the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the National Action Plan.

In 2022, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence chaired a total of nine Inter-Ministerial Committee meetings and NGOs were invited to attend three. All meetings were held online.

Meeting 1	11 January
Meeting 2	8 February
Meeting 3	12 April
Meeting 4	3 May
Meeting 5	21 June
Meeting 6	19 July
Meeting 7	5 August
Meeting 8	1 September
Meeting 9	7 October
Meeting 10	16 November

Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg attended the quarterly meeting between the members of the Inter-Ministerial Committee and NGO representatives on 19 July which was held in person at the University of Malta in Valletta Campus.

In addition to the monthly IMC meetings, in May, the Commission coordinated one-to-one meetings with each focal point to follow up on pending

measures within the National Action Plan as the second National Strategy was slated to conclude at the end of 2022.

Achieved	In Process	Pending	Total number of outcomes
11	2	1	13

The table above highlights the progress of the implementation of the expected outcomes of the National Action Plan during 2022.

7.2 Development of third National Strategy and Action Plan

During the third quarter of 2022, the Commission staff initiated preparatory work on the drafting of the third National Strategy and Action Plan. In October, the Commission initiated one-to-one meetings with the members of the Inter-Ministerial Committee to discuss the policy measures within their respective domains, and the possibility of including additional initiatives given the five-year timeframe.

7.3 Monitoring of GREVIO recommendations

As the national coordinating body, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence is also tasked with monitoring the implementation of the recommendations put forth by GREVIO in 2020. The Commission requested updates from each entity on the work carried out during 2022 to address GREVIO's recommendations.

08 Visit by Parliamentary Secretary

The Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, and her team visited the offices of the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence on 5 May 2022. Hon. Buttigieg met with all Commission staff members and was duly informed about its ongoing projects and activities. Both teams expressed their sincere commitment to strengthen the fight against domestic violence and remain accountable towards all those whose lives it impacts.



Hon. Buttigieg & Commissioner Friggieri at the Commission's office



Hon. Buttigieg with the Commission staff

09 Community Awareness

9.1 Awareness-raising campaigns

9.1.1 Engaging men and boys in violence prevention

In the first quarter of 2022, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence committed to deliver an awareness-raising campaign on the contribution of men and boys in challenging gender stereotypes and norms. In collaboration with Men Against Violence, the Commission also organised a conference to focus on the role of men and boys in combatting gender-based violence and domestic violence.

9.1.1.1 AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES

To raise awareness amongst the general public about the role of men and boys in preventing domestic violence and gender-based violence, the Commission contacted various local public figures to develop a series of video clips with messages reflecting the role of men and boys in gender-based violence prevention.



A poster on discriminatory proverbs

In tandem with these video clips, the Commission created a series of posters that reimagined discriminatory proverbs, with the goal of challenging gender stereotypes and norms. These posters were not only featured on the Commission's social media pages, but also on the Lovin Malta website. As a lead-up to a conference on engaging men and boys in violence prevention, these video clips and posters were shared online.



A video clip of Ben Camille on the role of men & boys in violence prevention



Engaging Men & Boys in Violence Prevention Conference



Commissioner Audrey Friggieri at the Engaging Men & Boys in Violence Prevention Conference

9.1.1.2 CONFERENCE

On 18 March 2022, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence & Domestic Violence, in collaboration with Men Against Violence, hosted a conference on the engagement of men and boys in violence prevention.

The conference titled, 'Engaging Men & Boys in Violence Prevention', sought to generate a discussion on men's contribution in violence prevention and in challenging patriarchal and stereotypical gender norms.

To discuss such concepts, the conference included two panel discussions involving academics and professionals from various fields to exchange views on masculinities, sports, education, LGBTIQ+ communities, the allyship and active bystander approaches, equal parenthood and gender portrayals in the media.

The Commission also invited representatives from eMANcipator in the Netherlands and MÄN Organisation in Sweden to share with us their experiences of working with men and boys in their countries. These organisations also form part of the MenEngage Alliance Europe.



Aleks Dimitrijevic, Andrew Hogg & Aaron Zammit Apap at the Engaging Men & Boys in Violence Prevention Conference



The intervention by Jens van Tricht from eMANcipator, Netherlands at the Engaging Men & Boys in Violence Prevention Conference



The intervention by Marco Vega from MÄN Organisation Sweden at the Engaging Men & Boys in Violence Prevention Conference

9.1.2 Women's Day

To inaugurate Women's Day, the Commission collaborated with domestic violence shelters and NGOs by inviting shelter residents to contribute short empowering messages or quotes to raise awareness and to encourage women who may be experiencing violence to speak up. Posters with these messages were designed and disseminated on the Commission's social media platforms on Women's Day.



Post for Women's Day in English



Post for Women's Day in Maltese

9.1.3 'Consent Matters: Stop Sexual Violence.'

The Commission organised an online awareness-raising campaign on sexual assault and sexual harassment titled, 'Consent Matters: Stop Sexual Violence.', with the aim of highlighting the importance of consent and the active bystander approach whilst providing more information on the services which aid victims of sexual violence.

To address these aims, the Commission designed and published several posters on social media to inform the general public on consent and to inform people who may witness sexual violence to report and help potential victims in a safe manner.

Moreover, the Commission published infographics on the procedures that ensue when one seeks professional assistance through service providers due to experiences of sexual violence. To provide more information on these procedures, the Commission posted a series of videos showcasing interviews with service providers from Aġenzija Appoġġ, Malta Police Force, Health, Victim Support Malta and Legal Aid Agency.





A poster depicting the importance of active bystander intervention and consent

To conclude this campaign, the Commission issued four video clips targeting the main concepts of the campaign: the importance of consent, the important role of active bystanders and the services' helplines.



One of the video interviews with service providers



One of the video clips for the 'Consent Matters: Stop Sexual Violence.' campaign

9.1.4 'All Humans have Dignity. RESPECT. PROTECT.'

During the third quarter of 2022, the Commission dedicated its efforts towards the development and delivery of an awareness-raising campaign that centred on migrants' experiences of gender-based violence and domestic violence. The title of the campaign, 'All Humans have Dignity: RESPECT. PROTECT.', is meant to communicate the pervasiveness of gender-based violence and domestic violence across all segments of Maltese society. The campaign also acknowledged the intersectional nature of such violence and the barriers that both victims and supporting professionals may encounter.

The campaign encompassed three activities: the dissemination of multilingual posters, focus groups with field professionals and information sessions with migrants residing in open centres. The multilingual posters were developed in collaboration with UNHCR Malta. Nine different designs and messages commonly communicated the state's intolerance towards all forms of gender-based violence. These were shared through posts on the Commission's Facebook and Instagram pages, through sponsored adverts on Facebook and Instagram and through printed copies which were disseminated amongst primary healthcare and community clinics, state schools, the Ministry for Gozo and Migrant Women Association.



The below table depicts online statistics for the nine posters which were shared during October, November and December on the Commission's social media pages.

Post	Language	Reach
#1	English	86,535
	Arabic	8,382
	French	6,108
#2	English	90,143
	Arabic	8,224
	French	5,280
#3	English	52,784
	Arabic	7,974
	French	5,132
#4	English	49,633
	Arabic	8,232
	French	5,552
#5	English	48,512
	Arabic	7,900
	French	5,182
#6	English	46,712
	Arabic	8,316
	French	5,648
#7	English	45,801
	Arabic	7,602
	French	5,308
#8	English	49,472
	Arabic	8,044
	French	5,702
#9	English	49,296
	Arabic	7,950
	French	5,540

The Commission also held two focus groups with different professionals from various fields. Each focus group was mediated by a qualified mediator and covered a set of pertinent questions relating to professionals' experiences with supporting victims who are migrants. Numerous areas for improvement were identified through these sessions, which will inform the Commission's dedicated awareness-raising campaigns and policy development during 2023.

The third activity of this campaign involved outreach sessions with families residing at the Hal Far Family Centre and men residing at the Hal Far Tent Centre. In collaboration with the Migrant Women Association, dedicated speakers met with residents and discussed issues relating to gender stereotyping and how this increases tolerance for gender-based violence.



Information session at Hal Far



9.1.5 International Days

Throughout the year, the Commission commemorated several international days designated by the United Nations by developing awareness-raising material which were shared on its social media platforms.



6th February 2022

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation



8th March 2022

International Women's Day



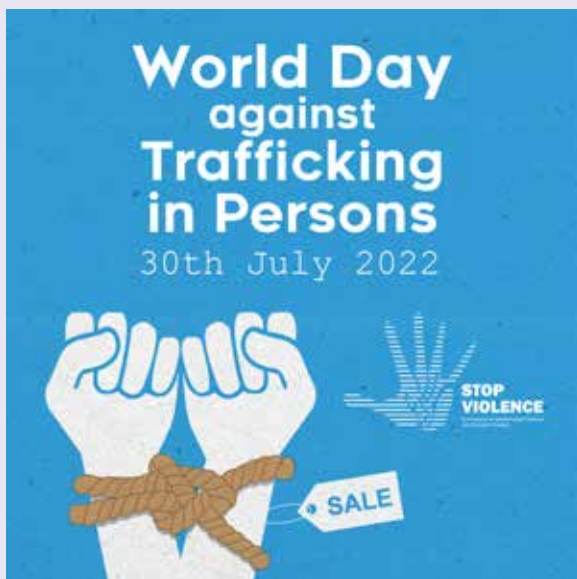
8th February 2022

Safer Internet Day



15th June 2022

International Day against Elder Abuse



30th July 2022

World Day against Trafficking in Persons



19th November 2022

International Men's Day



20th November 2022

World Children's Day



10th December 2022

International Human Rights Day



18th December 2022

International Migrants Day

9.1.6 World Cup awareness-raising campaign

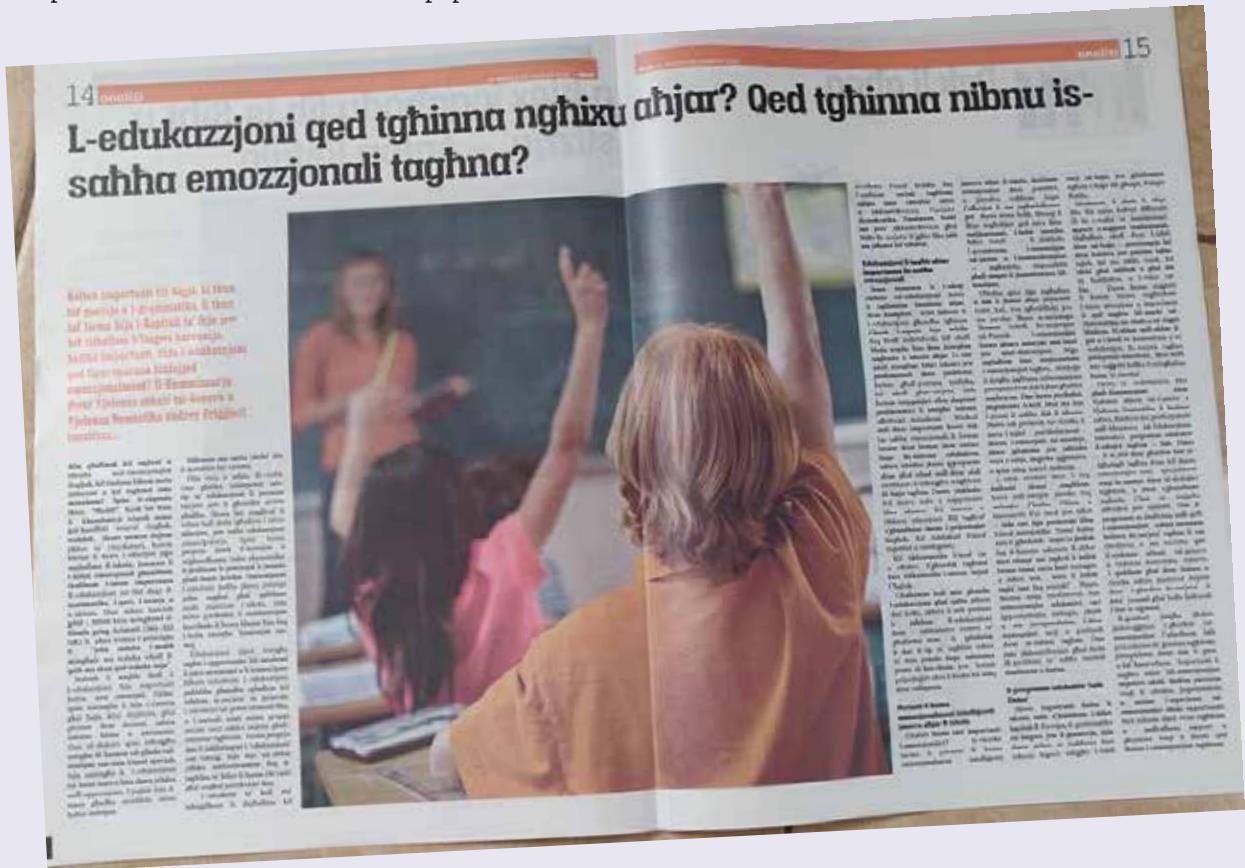
On 21 November 2022, the Commission launched the World Cup awareness-raising campaign, which involved designing posters displaying different teams playing in the World Cup. The posters were then disseminated online throughout the entire tournament and printed posters were distributed to local bars and restaurants across Malta and Gozo where the World Cup games were being broadcasted.



Posters disseminated throughout the World Cup

9.2 Newspaper articles

Throughout 2022, Commissioner Audrey Friggieri penned various articles relating to domestic violence and gender-based violence. A number of articles were published online on multiple newsportals and in printed form in several local newspapers.



Article on Illum, 2 January 2022



Article on Illum, 9 February 2022



Article on The Malta Independent, 8 March 2022



Article on IlluM, 30 June 2022

9.3 Participation in local and international conferences

Throughout 2022, Commission staff attended and participated in various local and international conferences relevant to its mandate.

Name	Date	Organisation
Transform Project's Final Conference	19 January	Human Rights Directorate
International Women's Day Business Breakfast	8 March	Human Rights Directorate
COVID-19 and Inequality: Everyone in the same boat?	27 April	Human Rights Platform of the University of Malta
Parental Alienation Seminar – Awareness is Key	5 May	Happy Parenting Malta
Child Contact and Violence Against Women	9 June	Human Rights Directorate
WWP EN Annual Conference 2022	17 – 19 August	WWP EN
Diversity as Strength: Putting LGBTIQ Equality into Practice	5 September	National Commission for the Promotion of Equality
Youth: A Shared Vision – Stakeholders' Conference Programme	15 September	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh
Conference of the Ministers of Council of Europe Member States	29 & 30 September	Council of Europe
Legal Aid Forum 2022	30 September	Legal Aid Malta in collaboration with the Judicial Studies Committee
Meeting of national co-ordinating bodies established under the Istanbul Convention	15 November	The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Council of Europe
Connecting Worlds Conference	24 November	Fondazzjoni Sebħ
E4D Final Conference	24 November	National Commission for the Promotion of Equality
A Focus on Child to Parent Violence	25 November	Foundation for Social Welfare Services
13 th meeting of the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention	5 & 6 December	The Secretariat of the Council of Europe



The Commissioner at the WWP EN Annual Conference in Dublin



Hon. Attard, Commissioner Friggieri & Hon. Buttigieg at Conference in Dublin



16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

10.1 'Domestic Violence is Everybody's Business'

Every year, the Commission coordinates the international 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence awareness-raising campaign on a national level. The campaign calls for action towards the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls and spans from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, the International Human Rights Day. Thus, the Commission invites

government stakeholders, non-governmental organisations, educational institutions and student organisations to collaborate on initiatives and activities to raise awareness about gender-based violence and domestic violence.

The theme chosen by the Commission for the 16 Days of Activism 2022 campaign was 'Domestic violence is everybody's business'/'Il-vjolenza domestika hi affari ta' kulhadd'.

10.1.1 Press launch

The 16 Days of Activism campaign was launched by Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, Commissioner Audrey Friggieri and Dr Lydia Abela on 24 November through a press launch held at the Commission's office in Qormi.



Dr Lydia Abela, Commissioner Audrey Friggieri & Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg at 16 Days of Activism launch

10.1.2 Calendar of events

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM 2022 EVENTS CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

24th Connecting Worlds Conference (Pankajgopal, I&EP) 09:00 - 02:30 | SanĠAnton Palace
 Opening of 16 Days Campaign (Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, Audrey Figgies & Dr Lydia Abela) 17:00 - 18:00 | CGBVDV Premises
 Intimate Femicide: The Institutional Response in Spain (Department of Gender and Sexuality) 17:30 - 19:30 | Facebook Live Event

25th Launch of road signs campaign (Dr Lydia Abela, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg & Com. Audrey Figgies) 14:00 - 15:00 | Bormla
 FGSW Conference (Com. Audrey Figgies, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg & Dr Lydia Abela & Minister Michael Fenech) 09:30 - 11:00 | Zylion Active Ageing Centre

26th Activity for Children (Dr Lydia Abela, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg & VSA) 10:00 - 10:00 | Dar Merħba Bk
 Creative Workshop in Dar Merħba Bk Shelter (CGBVDV - Elaine Grech) 16:00 - 18:00 | Dar Merħba Bk

28th Creative Workshop in Dar Chabaz Shelter (CGBVDV - Elaine Grech) 15:30 - 17:30 | Dar Chabaz
 Information session with Bormla's middle school educators on students' disclosure of DV (Audrey Figgies - CGBVDV) 09:30 - 14:00 | St. Margaret Middle School, Bormla
 Interview with Commissioner (N&A) | Bym The Stage
 Online discussion about SCIV and intimate partner violence within the LGBT+ community (M&PM) 11:00 - 20:00 | Facebook Live Event

29th Interview with Commissioner (DIO) | TVAM
 Interview with Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg (VSA)
 Information Talk (CGBVDV & AACQ) 9:00 - 10:30 | Żurrieg Active Ageing Centre
 DV Book Launch (Dr Lydia Abela, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg)

30th Interview with Commissioner (E&S) | N&A
 Webinar on Violence Against Women (Department of Gender and Sexuality) 18:00 - 19:00 | Online via Zoom

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM 2022 EVENTS CALENDAR

DECEMBER

01st Information Talk (CGBVDV & AACQ) 9:00 - 10:30 | Sliema Active Ageing Centre

02nd Visit to Dar Hossa (Dr Lydia Abela & Vivian, Isabella Buttigieg) 10:00 | Dar Hossa
 End of year Conference (Victim Support Agency) 08:30 - 12:30 | Urban Valley Hotel & Spa
 Interview with Commissioner (D&A) | Kalamita

03rd Sports Event (TBC) | TBC
 Creative Workshop in X-64ja Shelter (CGBVDV - Elaine Grech) 16:00 - 18:00 | X-64ja

06th Gozo Conference (Dr Lydia Abela, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg & Audrey Figgies) (TBC) | Gozo
 Information Talk (CGBVDV & AACQ) 9:00 - 10:30 | Heliella Active Ageing Centre

07th Interview with Mvintage (Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg)
 Information Talk (CGBVDV & AACQ) 9:00 - 10:30 | Siggiewi Active Ageing Centre
 Roundtable discussion on Engaging Men and Boys in violence prevention (CGBVDV & Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg) 8:30 - 12:30 | The Virgin Drosopora Resort

09th Closing Conference and Film (Dr Lydia Abela, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg & Audrey Figgies) (TBC) | TBC

10th Launch of Bormla's School plays (TBC) 17:30 - 18:30 | Santa Margherita Bormla

ALL 16 DAYS

- Online campaign (+ World Cup Campaign) (CGBVDV)
- Online campaign (SOS Malta & The Malta Women's Lobby)
- Online/Printed awareness-raising campaign (NCPE)
- Stickers/posters for pubs/clubs showing World Cup matches across Malta and Gozo (CGBVDV)
- Awareness-raising shelf at Central Public Library Floriana (Malta Libraries)
- Lighting of Ministry facade in orange (1st December - 8th December) (Ministry for Public Works and Planning - MPWP)
- Lighting of Tritoni Fountain (2nd December - 4th December) (Ministry for Public Works and Planning - MPWP)
- Drawing & Writing Competition (CGBVDV)
- Lighting of public buildings (Ministry for Gozo - MGOZ)
- Awareness-raising stands in public spaces (Ministry for Gozo - MGOZ)
- Launch of DV - prevention road sign campaign (Bormla local council)
- Initiative Purchase receipt with DV - prevention message (Mvintage, Cikka, Busy Bee)
- First week of December - Article to be published in Rivista FAMILJA (Ministry for Social Policy & Children's Rights - MSPC)

Domestic violence is everybody's business!
Il-vjolenza domestika hija affari ta' kulhadd!

16 Days of Activism calendar of events

10.2 Awareness-raising initiatives

10.2.1 Social media campaign

Throughout the 16 Days of Activism, various videos from previous awareness-raising campaigns were shared on the Commission's Facebook and Instagram pages.

The official calendar, which included the multiple events being organized during the 16 Days of Activism, was also made available online and on the Commission's website.



Videos from previous awareness-raising campaigns

10.2.2 Preventive message on fiscal receipts

With the collaboration of Mvintage, Ćikka and Busy Bee, the Commission was able to include a preventive message on fiscal receipts aimed at empowering persons experiencing violence to seek help. This initiative spanned throughout the entire 16 Days of Activism.



Mvintage fiscal receipt

10.2.3 Road sign campaign

Another initiative coordinated by the Commission as part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign was the installation of road signs which featured a purple heart and a preventive message in English or Maltese. The Commission collaborated with several local councils across Malta and Gozo.



Road signs

10.3 Activities

10.3.1 Creative workshops

The Commission coordinated the delivery of three creative workshops titled, 'Let us express!', with the residents of Dar Merħba Bik, Dar Għabex and Fondazzjoni Sebħ – Il-Milja. The sessions were delivered by Dr Elaine Grech.



Poster for creative workshop

10.3.2 Drawing and creative writing competition

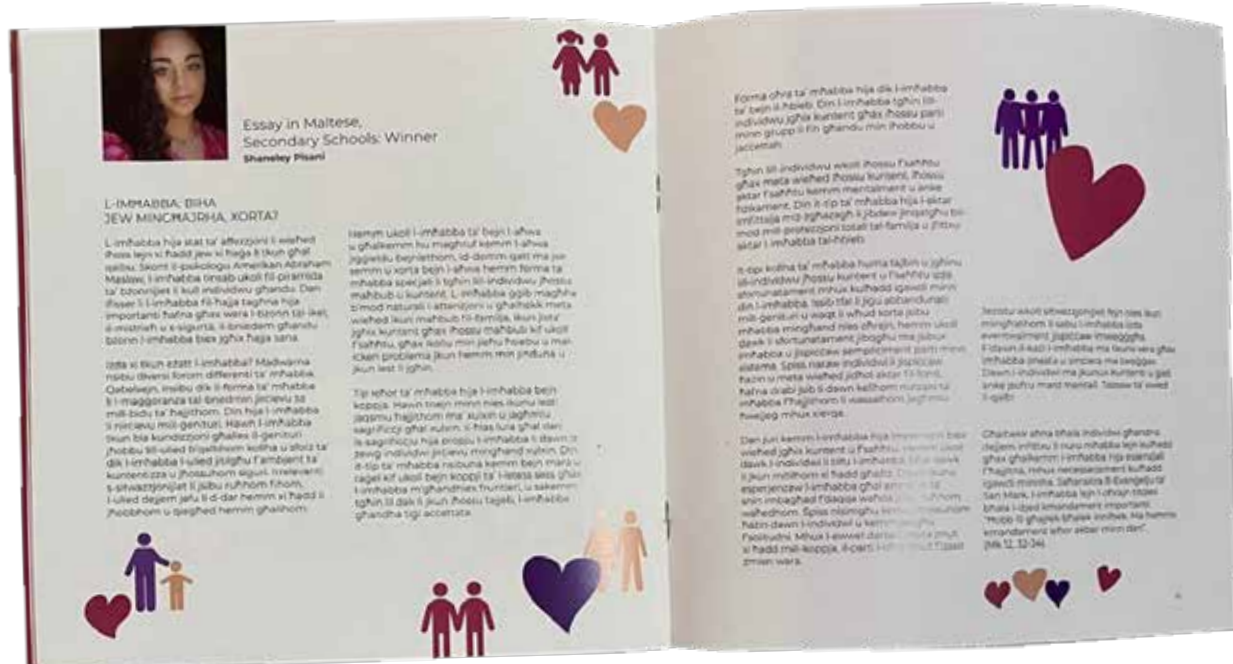
10.3.2.1 AWARD CEREMONY FOR DRAWING AND CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION 2021/2022

Following the drawing and creative writing competition for Primary and Secondary schools in 2021, the Commission hosted an award ceremony for students to celebrate the winners and runners-up of the drawing and creative writing competitions whilst emphasising the importance of respectful relationships.

The Commission also prepared a booklet with the entries of the winners and runners-up of both competitions to commemorate the students' creative and artistic work for the drawing and creative writing competition of 2021.



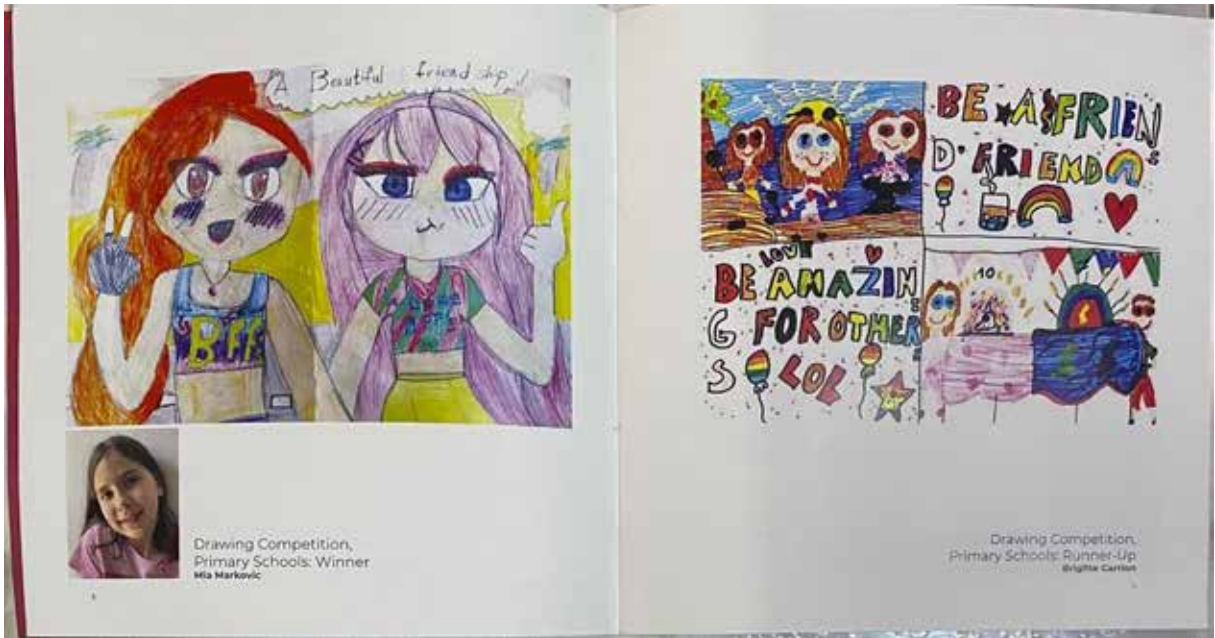
Booklet with students' entries for the drawing & writing competition



Booklet with students' entries for the drawing & writing competition



Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg & Commissioner Friggieri at the award ceremony



Booklet with students' entries for the drawing & writing competition

10.3.2.2 DRAWING & CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION 2022/23

As part of the 16 Days of Activism activities, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence launched its annual drawing and creative writing competition for students of all Primary and Secondary schools in Malta and Gozo.

This year's themes are 'L-Imħabba hija...' ('Love is...') for the drawing competitions of both Primary and Secondary schools whereas for the creative writing competitions, the theme for Primary

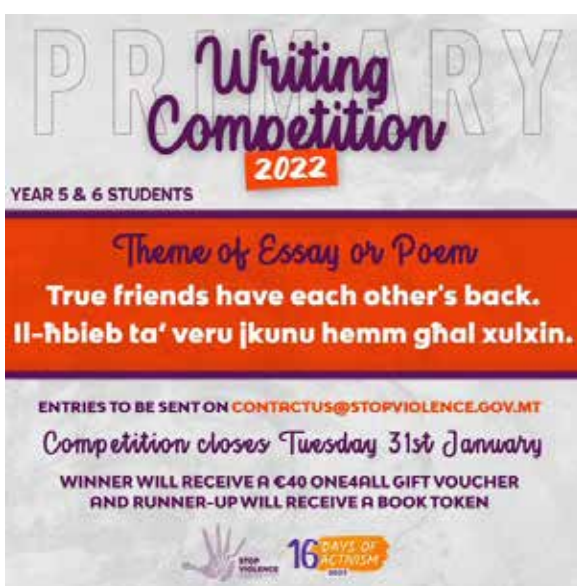
students is 'Il-Ħbieb ta' Veru Jkunu Hemm għal Xulxin' ('True Friends Have Each Other's Back') and for Secondary students the theme is 'Ġib Ruħek ma' Haddieħor Kif Tixtieq li Haddieħor Iġib Ruħu Miegħek' ('Treat Others the Way You Want to be Treated'). These themes were chosen to raise awareness amongst students about healthy and caring relationships.



Drawing competition flyer for Primary students



Drawing competition flyer for Secondary students



Writing competition flyer for Primary students



Writing competition flyer for Secondary students

10.3.3 Roundtable discussion on engaging men and boys in violence prevention

Following the interesting discussions that took place during the ‘Engaging Men & Boys in Violence Prevention’ Conference in March 2022, the Commission was committed to holding a roundtable discussion with the aim of providing a platform to generate recommendations for policy measures on the contribution of men and boys in preventing domestic violence and gender-based violence.

For this reason, the Commission invited a number of academics, organisations and stakeholders who are experts in the field to voice their recommendations on the role and involvement of men and boys in violence prevention. Dr Declan Coogan, an expert from Galway University in Ireland, was invited to share his experience of working with men and boys who are victims of domestic violence as well as men and boys who perpetrate domestic violence and gender-based violence.



Dr Declan Coogan, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg & Commissioner Audrey Friggieri at the roundtable discussion



Roundtable discussion on Engaging Men & Boys in Violence Prevention

10.4 Information talks

10.4.1 Information sessions in collaboration with Active Ageing and Community Care

During the 16 Days of Activism, the Commission collaborated with the Active Ageing and Community Care in the organisation of five information sessions for the members of each active ageing centre and elderly persons living within the community.

The talks were delivered by Mr Karl Grech from Victim Support Malta and the Commission disseminated informational and promotional material amongst the participants. The sessions focused on what domestic violence is and where to seek help. Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg attended and gave an address during the information session at Sliema Active Ageing Centre.

Active Ageing Centre	Date
Żejtun Active Ageing Centre	25 November
Żurrieq Active Ageing Centre	29 November
Sliema Active Ageing Centre	1 December
Mellieħa Active Ageing Centre	6 December (rescheduled for 10 January 2023)
Sigġiewi Active Ageing Centre	7 December

10.4.2 Information sessions with educators

The Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence held two information sessions with the educators of St Margaret College Primary and Middle schools in Cospicua as part of its awareness-raising initiatives during the 16 Days of Activism.

These information sessions were delivered by Commissioner Audrey Friggieri and Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri from the Faculty for Social Wellbeing to better equip educators on how to recognise and support children who experience domestic violence at home.

Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri & Commissioner Audrey Friggieri at St Margaret College Cospicua Primary School



10.5 Participation in the media

10.5.1 Television



NET Live



NET TV



TVAM



TVM



Kalamita, ONE TV

THE SUNDAY TIMES OF MALTA

OPINIONS AND LETTERS

Domestic violence:

Everyone's business

AUDREY FRIGGIERI



to speak about what hurts us and what we hope and expect for ourselves and others. This includes being conscious of the fact that, apart from the words we use, our tone of voice and actions matter in how the recipients receive and make sense of our message.

Being well and happy is not just about being cheerful, it is an elusive, precious feeling that we all desire. Two basic requirements that must be met for us to feel well and happy as human beings are the need for attention from those close to us and a sense of security and safety.

As research reveals, a lack of attention can lead to low self-esteem, feelings of loneliness and a lack of connection whereas anxiety will result from not feeling safe in our living spaces. This means that, as human beings, we need each other to be happy; we need to feel connected and secure. This is so essential to human life that scholars today speak about well-being literacy: the ability of communicating intentionally about well-being, both one's own and that of those around us.

Well-being literacy is more than just reading and writing; it necessitates vocabulary and knowledge, such that people can be articulate about the things that they value. This can be nurtured both at home and at school and transmits to the child the importance of being aware of oneself, one's emotions and needs at any given moment.

Being 'well-being literate' means that we can use language

Moreover, as experts tell us, employers stand to gain much more when they hire based on applicants' attitude rather than their technical knowledge and skills. Employees who have 'soft skills', or, as it is fashionable to put it, 'a positive mindset', are generally more eager to learn and also more able and willing to adjust to changes at the workplace.

Domestic violence and gender-based violence are everybody's business because they attack the safety, mental health, quality of life and well-being of those receiving it. These are mostly, albeit not exclusively, women and girls.

As a society, we have become more aware of the negative and immediate impacts of gendered family violence, which happens at all levels of society, including in what everyone of us understands by 'good homes', and whose extreme expression is femicide.

We have witnessed yet another femicide these past days. Bernice Cassar was killed, allegedly by her estranged husband who then pro-

fessed his love for his children on social media.

Words cannot express the excess that such a tragedy evokes in the human heart. And, yet, we need words to understand and inspire each other, to actively engage in making our society better, safer and more just.

Socialisation plays a vital role in our collective consciousness, in the formation of our reasoning, thinking and decision-making. Early childhood is often referred to as the critical period in human development because it is during these early years that the foundations of mind and personality are formed.

Children growing up in violence can internalise these behaviours as 'the norm' in the long term and professionals notice that their tolerance of violence in future relationships is much higher than those who were never exposed. This can

Children growing up in violence can internalise these behaviours as 'the norm'



Bernice Cassar (inset) was shot dead on her way to work. PHOTOS: JONATHAN BORG/FACEBOOK

affect both men, women and LGBTIQ+ individuals. People can grow up to automatically replicate behavioural patterns that they have been familiar with since childhood.

For example, research shows that women who grow up in violence will often enter violent relationships and leave and return to them sometimes many times before they make a final break. Often, they begin a new relationship with yet another person who uses violence.

Boys growing up in violence are equally affected. Unless there is holistic targeted intervention, the cycle will continue. We must support all people affected by gendered violence, the victims and those who use violence, at all stages of the cycle when it is happening, when children are forming friendships, when teens are forming romantic relationships, when a woman is having her first child, when a man is about to become a dad, in sporting teams and at work.

There is no best approach and no magic wand. It will take intervention at all life stages to really make a change. The pandemic and lockdown measures worldwide have revealed the size of the monster and this has shocked everyone except those who work within the field of domestic abuse. Sadly, we

were already aware of the 'shadow pandemic' that happens behind closed doors.

It is for this reason that the Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence prioritises everyone's involvement in understanding domestic abuse and educating the public on how to reach out and help our friend, family member or work colleague who may be trapped within an abusive relationship.

This includes employers, leaders and heads of entities who are key in spotting the signs of domestic abuse but do not know how to appropriately support their employees.

Communication is essential; ask people how they are feeling, giving them the opportunity to disclose. Believe what they tell you and do not judge. Engage in training on domestic abuse and its relation to the workplace. Implement a domestic abuse policy or incorporate domestic abuse into existing policies.

Call 179 if you or someone you know is going through domestic violence or gender-based violence. Call 112 in case of emergency. Call the Gender-based Domestic Violence Unit: 2296 2717/2777.

Audrey Friggieri is commissioner, Commission on gender-based violence and domestic violence.



Financial Overview

The table below indicates the Commission's expenses in 2022 from Vote 6083, Vote 5246 and other line items.

Capital Expenditure	
Communication	€10,048.20
Office furniture	€3,853.67
Total amount	€13,901.87
Corporate Running Costs	
Rent and maintenance fees	€64,153.88
Honoraria of board members	€4,590.92
Salaries, allowances and social security contributions	€266,806.49
Tax deduction	€1,180.00
Local transport	€45,792.62
Travel abroad	€1,767.80
Annual subscriptions	€200.00
General expenses	€29,151.38
Recruitment expenses	€1,233.74
Total amount	€414,876.83
Professional Services	
Contracts for service	€20,867.49
Awareness Raising Expenses	
Education and training	€5,085.91
Awareness-raising campaigns and promotional material	€38,609.98
Total amount	€43,695.89
Total annual amount for 2022	€493,342.08

*NB. This financial overview is an estimate of the Commission's expenses and does not reflect the exact amount of expenses in 2022.

