

Opportunities and challenges in multidisciplinary cooperation combating and preventing gender-based violence

- What are forms and approaches to ensure and promote cooperation between stakeholders in your country? Who is responsible for multidisciplinary cooperation (involved organisations/institutions at local, regional, state level)?

Multidisciplinary cooperation between different institutions and organisations working in the field of domestic violence prevention is one of the key priorities in a newly amended Lithuanian national law on protection against domestic violence which goes into force on July 1, 2023 ([XIV-934 Lietuvos Respublikos apsaugos nuo smurto artimoje aplinkoje įstatymo Nr. XI-1425 pakeitimo įstatymas \(e-tar.lt\)](#)). The amendments were initiated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of Lithuania and as mentioned above, it perceives multidisciplinary cooperation as one of the key factors for an effective and efficient domestic violence prevention system. In particular, the law introduces:

1. A mechanism of inter-institutional cooperation

The law introduces a mechanism of inter-institutional cooperation between different ministries, police, specialised victims' support centres, child services, and other institutions and organization working in the field of domestic violence prevention and victims' protection – this will ensure that the competences are clearly divided and legally described under the law, as well as to secure an efficient exchange of personal data and other information relevant to domestic violence and its prevention, and to improve communication between different institutions and organizations.

2. Inter-institutional cooperation on national level

On a national level, a *Council of domestic violence prevention and protection against it* is set to examine domestic violence related issues and submit proposals to the Lithuanian Government, Parliament, ministries and other institutions, agencies and municipal administration offices about the implementation of the state policy of domestic violence prevention system. The Council will consist of 15 members: 7 representatives of state institutions and agencies, 1 representative of the Association of Lithuanian Municipalities and 7 representatives of non-governmental organizations. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour already approved the Regulations of the Council that can be accessed here: [A1-609 Dėl Smurto artimoje aplinkoje prevencijos ir apsaugos nuo smurto artimoje aplinkoje tarybos nuost... \(e-tar.lt\)](#) and [A1-617 Dėl Smurto artimoje aplinkoje prevencijos ir apsaugos nuo smurto artimoje aplinkoje tarybos insti... \(e-tar.lt\)](#).

3. Inter-institutional cooperation on a local level

On a local (municipal) level, a *Commission for the Prevention of Domestic Violence* will be set up in each municipality in Lithuania. The Commission will examine the issues of domestic violence, the proposals submitted by the above-mentioned Council, as well as submit proposals to municipal

institutions and agencies on the implementation of the domestic violence prevention policy, recommendations for behavioural change programmes for the perpetrators, as well as perform other functions specified in the Regulations of the Commission approved by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, that can be accessed here: [A1-607 Dėl Pavyzdinių smurto artimoje aplinkoje prevencijos komisijos veiklos nuostatų ir rekomenduojamo... \(e-tar.lt\)](#). Representatives of non-governmental organisations must make up at least one third of the members of the Commission.

- How multidisciplinary cooperation is organised, i.e., in both, formal and informal aspects? Is multidisciplinary cooperation regulated by some specific legal act? What are involved organisations/ institutions?

Formally, multidisciplinary cooperation is regulated by the already mentioned national law on protection against domestic violence. Moreover, additional regulations were recently adopted by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, regulating the operation, and recommended institutional composition of the national Council of domestic violence prevention and protection against it and the local Commissions for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (links are available above). As well there are working groups organized, consisting of different experts (related ministries, police, specialized support centres, child protection services, organizations representing people with disabilities, municipal representatives), that discuss matters related to the preparation of additional laws needed for the national law on protection against domestic violence to go into force in 2023.

Informal meetings and discussions are also held, on a regular basis, with the representatives of non-governmental organizations (i.e. specialized complex support centres, men's organizations), regarding domestic violence prevention, support and services for both the victims of DV as well as the perpetrators.

- Who is responsible for monitoring of the multidisciplinary cooperation from strategic perspective, i.e., whether and how the system is working, including developing new or revising current algorithms, analysing situation and trends? Who is monitoring multidisciplinary cooperation from tactical perspective (local level), i.e., analysing specific cases and necessary cooperation aspects on the ground level?

Ministry of Social Security and Labour of Lithuania is responsible for monitoring the multidisciplinary cooperation from strategic perspective, by forming and revising state policy and related laws on domestic violence prevention and monitoring the quality of the services available both for the victims of DV as well as the perpetrators.

On a local level, the monitoring of the multidisciplinary cooperation is within the responsibility of the municipalities, and, from 1 July, 2023 onwards, the Commission for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, that will be set up in every municipality in Lithuania, will, among other things, be in charge of managing and reporting to the Ministry about the cooperation on the local level.

- Can you describe cooperation mechanisms (algorithms) of the multidisciplinary cooperation teams, i.e., how the meetings are organized, who is leading, what are the roles of involved

partners and their competencies, what decision multidisciplinary cooperation teams can take, mandate of teams?

The meetings of working groups are organized on a regular basis, led by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The involved partners consist of the representatives from related ministries (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs), police, specialized complex support centres, child protection services, association of disability organizations, department of social services supervision, as well as representatives from municipality offices. Currently, the experts meet in working groups and share their expertise and opinions regarding the preparation of related laws aimed for the amended national law on protection against domestic violence to go into force on 1 July, 2023.

- Do you implement any activities to guarantee and/or strengthen cooperation between partners in multidisciplinary cooperation teams, i.e., to promote trust, common understating of goals etc. necessary for successful teamwork? Are there any formal documents/procedures for aforementioned activities?

The national law on protection against domestic violence regulates the principle of multidisciplinary cooperation between different institutions and organizations within domestic violence prevention system. Also, the regulations of the Council of domestic violence prevention and protection against it as well as the Commission for the Prevention of Domestic Violence foresee procedures of the related activities.