Title: Setting up a Europe-wide telephone hotline for violent men

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1 Objectives

1.1 Background

95% of all domestic violence occurs in the “dark field”. Victims of domestic violence are often unable to break the circle of violence on their own. Instead they put up with violence and continue to suffer from it. If a victim manages to escape from the cycle of violence, the perpetrator frequently becomes violent towards his new partner or her children. Future violence can only be prevented once and for all if it is possible to get hold of the perpetrators and convince them to stop their violent behaviour. The same applies to both physically and sexually violent men: only the perpetrators of violence can stop it.

However, without help the perpetrators rarely manage to break the cycle of violence. There is a stigma attached to violence committed within one’s own family, and the underlying patterns of behaviour are gender-specific. That is why the threshold for seeking help is exceptionally high among male offenders.

There have hardly been any investigations so far into how violent men can be persuaded effectively to get in touch with a counselling service and thus change their violent behaviour.

1.2 Specific objectives

Offenders are reached more effectively and are encouraged to seek counselling for violence via a telephone Hotline, a service which has been developed and adapted to the target group's requirements. This will end the violence at its source, namely the perpetrator.

This project is aimed primarily at perpetrators of domestic violence. Only the perpetrators can put a permanent end to violence. All victims can do is get out of harm's way.

First working hypothesis: Violent men from the “dark field” make use of counselling and therapy when these are available.

In the past counselling and therapy have been available mainly for violent men in the “bright field”, who are the tip of the iceberg. “Bright-field” perpetrators are known to the police and the judicial authorities. Beyond them are “grey-field” perpetrators known to welfare institutions such as youth welfare offices, public order authorities or institutions for the treatment of psychosocial disorders. The public image of violent men is conditioned by “bright field” and “grey field” perpetrators. Even specialists are also influenced by this image because they have most contact with the “bright field” and the “grey field”.

However, a mere five percent or so of perpetrators belong to the “bright field” and the “grey field”. The picture conjured up is of perpetrators whose origins, background and social class are clearly defined, that alcohol misuse is mostly involved and that women contribute to violence through their provocative behaviour. The Germans have a saying which roughly translates as, “one minute they’re hitting each other, the next they’re the best of friends”. There is no room in this picture for the better-off classes or well-educated and cultured offenders. But in reality they are there. Domestic violence is the only crime known to our society which is evenly spread demographically.

For this reason, working with men from the “dark field” has been neglected, although they make up 95% of offenders.

The Hotline pilot project assumes first that “dark-field” offenders will turn to counselling if they are approached in a way that is appropriate for their target group and if they are offered the right service.

Translator's note: German criminologists use expressions from the field of optics to denote the quantitative difference between recorded criminal offences (the so-called “bright field”) and presumed but unrecorded offences (the “dark field”).
Second, the experience of all counselling services attached to and associated with EuGeT suggests that there is a high probability that a telephone enquiry from a violent man will lead to a six to twelve-month period of counselling as an outpatient to treat his violence. The critical moment is the point at which contact is made with a “dark field” offender. This type of offender can be offered professional counselling if a creative and successful way of approaching him can be found.

Second working hypothesis
The telephone Hotline is a low-threshold approach, which is why it is suitable as a starting point for approaching this particular group of violent men from the “dark field”.

It is relatively easy for a violent man to ring a hotline because so little is required of him. The caller can remain anonymous and under no obligation. It does not involve much travelling or spending a lot of time or money. Therefore a hotline offers a low-threshold opportunity for initial contact.

1.3 Beneficiaries
The beneficiaries are all children, young people and women who are subject to male violence. Victims of domestic violence are not able, or hardly able, to break the cycle of violence through their own efforts because they have often been traumatised for years. The women go back with their children, who are equally affected, and endure further violence. If a victim escapes from the cycle of violence, it may be assumed that the perpetrator will also be violent towards his next partner and/or her children.

2 PUTTING THE PROJECT INTO PRACTICE
2.1 Developing the Hotline for violent men
2.1.1 Preliminary considerations for the project management
We initially gathered ideas for the Hotline from talks with experienced counsellors held in working meetings in our capacity as project managers. From these ideas we developed a blueprint for the Hotline in preparation for the project partners’ first working meeting. Particular attention was given to the following topics:

1. Evaluation
   Initial discussions with the Novara Research Institute and the Evolog Institute revealed both the potential and the limitations of evaluation. We decided on the Evolog Institute because it enabled us to learn as we went along, on account of its multi-level analysis and formative evaluation design. This allowed the Hotline to be continuously upgraded during use.

2. Financing advertising and the counsellors’ salaries during the test phase
   The Hotline was financed by EU funding. However, this did not include money for publicity or the counsellors’ wages and these funds had to be raised by the project partners, meaning we had to rely on the commitment and contacts of our local collaborating partners.

3. Publicity and advertising
   A Hotline must be made known to the target group and so must be advertised to the general public. The Hotline is aimed at the “dark field”, i.e. perpetrators who are neither recognised nor identified as such. We therefore needed broadly based public relations work, and extensive publicity campaigns had to be waged in the test locations. We had to work with professional advertisers to do this.

4. Places or regions for the test phase
   The Hotline could not be launched to give blanket coverage in all three countries which is why we decided to conduct the test phase in limited regions with different structures.
5. Advising versus referral to other counsellors
   The question as to whether the caller should receive advice on the telephone or whether he
   should be referred to another counsellor was hotly debated. To what extent can one give
   advice to offenders over the telephone? At what stage during intensive telephone
   consultations will a caller be put off availing himself of further face-to-face counselling? How
   comprehensive does the advice given over the telephone need to be? At what point does
   the offender become motivated to seek counselling?
   We prioritised the objectives which resulted from this discussion, the number one objective
   being to put the caller in touch with an advice centre. If the first objective could not be
   achieved, the alternative was to initiate a process of telephone advice at weekly intervals.
   This counselling should not take place using the Hotline number, so that it did not get
   blocked.

6. Chat room
   We created the new idea of having a chat room for offenders. We eagerly prepared this
   idea for the discussion with the collaborating partners.

7. Target groups
   Our primary target group consisted of men who were violent towards their families. Other
   groups of likely callers were identified during early discussions. We thought it possible that
   women who had been violent towards their children would also ring up. We were sure that
   victims of violence would also contact the Hotline. Journalists and other professional
   interested parties would possibly call too. Of course all these groups of callers should be
   given professional advice according to their needs, or receive information as appropriate.

8. Lists of addresses for referral
   The internet and guides to counselling services had to be researched thoroughly so that
   callers could be referred to other counsellors. The telephone counsellor had to have the
   data prepared for him in an uncomplicated way, so that he could access them quickly
   during telephone calls. We also considered it particularly important to set up a practical and
   up-to-date database for identifying victims.

9. Choice of telephone counsellors
   Who would successfully be able to give counselling over the telephone? What demands
   would be made of a telephone counsellor when advising the callers? Callers must have the
   impression that they are talking with an experienced and competent counsellor. Who had
   these skills, and what else did the counsellors need?
   We took these questions on the further training to be given to the telephone counsellors to
   our meeting held in Nuremberg with the collaborating partners. In our opinion the telephone
   counsellors should be trained to work with offenders and should have experience working in
   this field.

10. Duties of telephone counsellors:
    - being on call and providing counselling over the Hotline;
    - giving feedback to the project managers and advice centres;
    - filling out caller questionnaires for the evaluation;
    - preparing and participating in the analysis meetings.

11. Supranational organisation (network)
    The Hotline was envisaged as a supranational EU project and for this reason, but also to
    keep expenses down, we wanted to set up a supranational network. The Hotline was not
    only jointly organised, but also all incoming calls from the various test regions were
    switched to one central number and then redirected to the counsellor who was on call.
    The collaborating partners and telephone counsellors were spread over various regions and
countries. They were to offer a joint service, but at the same time one that was
    differentiated and specialised. This required extensive logistics to ensure that, for example,
all telephone services were manned or that if one counsellor was absent, another could immediately take over.

12. Sustained financing and establishment
As of early 2004 we wanted to devote more energy to this task in order to be able to offer the Hotline as a permanent service.

13. Technology
We wanted the Hotline to have the same telephone number for the whole of Europe.

14. Website
The Hotline project was an EU project which is why we wanted to publicise it giving it an EU website address. On several occasions we were advised that these addresses would be made available to us some time during 2003. We intended to use the following domains: www.Gewalt-Hotline.eu and www.Hotline.eu. We wanted to present the Hotline on our own website under one of these addresses and use it to display the up-to-date findings and results. The chat room was to be integrated into the website.

2.1.2 Working meeting in Munich
The first working meeting with the collaborating partners in Munich was based on this provisional blueprint and was held on 2 and 3 April 2003 in the Hotel Europa. We had originally planned to hold this meeting in February but needed more time for the preliminary tasks.

The collaborating partners were from various countries and differing institutions. There were significant differences in their jobs and ways of working. Even their mentality and the strength of their attachment to local conditions were not the same. In order to make the Hotline a joint project we took all this into account and allowed the project partners a lot of space for their own ideas and backgrounds.

We worked together with the collaborating partners to develop the Hotline on the basis of the provisional blueprint. All the collaborating partners were very keen to become a test location. Together we examined the suitability of each location, with Hamburg, Upper Austria and Luxembourg emerging as the most suitable.

It became increasingly clear that publicity was of central importance, since it would only be possible to reach potential callers via public relations work and advertising. No-one knew of course about the new Hotline product. Because of this we decided to change the plans contained in our proposal and work on plans for advertising in a joint meeting instead of with each of the collaborating partners individually.

Männer gegen Männergewalt® East Westphalia took on the task of producing a draft.

We published the blueprint for the Hotline which had been developed up to that point on the website www.EuGeT.org.

We decided to set up our own website under the domain www.Gewalt-Hotline.eu which would provide information and a means for those affected by violence to get in touch. Unfortunately it later turned out that we could not use EU addresses as they have not yet been made available.

2.2 Developing public relations work
New services within the psychosocial field are usually only publicised internally, i.e. in the psychosocial sector. They cater for “bright field” and “grey field” clients, meaning that it is those who are already known who are offered help by social service institutions. Offenders are dealt with by the criminal prosecution services.

Until now advertising concepts have all suffered from one serious drawback in that they do not reach offenders in the “dark field”. It is hardly possible to reach clients who have no contact with the psychosocial area using these channels.
In our view this is a key reason why violent men do not seek counselling. New strategies are needed to reach these men. Männer gegen Männer-Gewalt© East Westphalia worked on this together with an advertising agency and proposed an advertising concept.

### 2.2.1 Working meeting in Mainz

In the run-up to the meeting we drafted the research design together with the Evolog Institute. The director in charge presented this plan to the collaborating partners at the second meeting held with them between 30 June and 2 July 2003 in Mainz, and in our joint discussion we agreed on the final design.²

The collaborating partner East Westphalia presented the advertising concept for the Hotline. It was warmly approved and the participants were impressed because for the first time an advert was aimed directly at perpetrators. This was a completely new approach. Violence is otherwise treated as scandalous and its perpetrators ostracised, or else the aim is to appeal to a perpetrator’s conscience by focusing on the victims.

The new advertising concept appealed to perpetrators through the disparity between their longing for a happy relationship and their violent behaviour. The Hotline would offer the way of overcoming this imbalance.

Since it is improbable that one offender would recommend the Hotline to another, it was necessary to launch an intensive public advertising campaign. The cost the advertising agency calculated for this left the collaborating partners speechless. All the participants were uncertain just how much of these funds they would be able to raise.

Upper Austria, Luxembourg and Hamburg had already emerged as test locations at the meeting in Munich. These collaborating partners had made it clear that human resources for counselling the callers were, or could be made, available. The representatives of these institutions indicated that they believed they would be able to raise money for the Hotline locally, since the budget for the project did not provide money for local advertising or counsellors’ salaries.

The finalized advertising concept was printed as a brochure and also published on the website.

### 2.2.2 Working meeting in Nuremberg

In the previous meetings with the collaborating partners we learned to appreciate the value of professional and efficient cooperation. This is why we decided to hold one more meeting with the collaborating partners in Nuremberg in September.

We also noted that holding a specialist conference in the first year would be of little value to the project. However, we thought it helpful to hold a seminar at the end of the project to evaluate it and ensure sustainability. As a result we postponed the date of the specialist conference until autumn 2004.

The collaborating partners which had applied to be test locations presented the results of their activities to introduce the Hotline.³

The director of the Evolog Research Institute presented the questionnaires which had since been prepared for the telephone counsellors and counselling services to use. The complexity of this task for the telephone counsellors made it clear that an introduction to the accompanying research would need to be included in the programme of further training provided for them. Evolog agreed to participate in this. The question was whether all the participating institutions could be motivated to take part in the accompanying research. Would the research cover all offenders who called?

² See annex for the research design
³ See the annex for a list of the activities in Upper Austria and Luxembourg.
The discussions were wide-ranging and an agreement was reached on the costs to be borne jointly. How much the telephone counsellors were to be paid and the availability and therefore the operating hours were decided. The cost of setting up the chat room and particularly of making the TV commercial was so high that it had to be shared. For this reason the representatives of the test locations made a joint decision to go ahead with both and split the costs three ways.

2.3 Building up a database

The callers are initially counselled on the telephone. However, a one-off telephone counselling session is not enough to change violent behaviour on a permanent basis. Even several telephone counselling sessions are not the best way forward. The most successful counselling is through face-to-face contact with an experienced violence counsellor. In order to refer the callers for counselling, the telephone counsellors must have access to reliable and up-to-date information when on the telephone. We thought there would be three groups of callers which the telephone counsellors should be armed for. They would therefore need:

1. addresses of counselling services and therapists who work with violent men;
2. addresses of counselling services and therapists who work with victims;
3. services which work with family members and institutions which provide additional support.

As it was expected that the advertisements would appear in the national media, the database had to include the above institutions for each country.
This information was prepared in such a way that it would be easy to access and accurately enter during the course of a telephone conversation.

We would like to point out one particular experience when we were compiling the database. We contacted the German Federal Association of Counselling Services for Women (Bundesverband der Frauenberatungsstellen) to obtain addresses of victim support agencies and received a very positive response. A comprehensive and detailed database of addresses was promptly placed at our disposal so that we could immediately refer victims who called to qualified services. It was immediately obvious that the offenders’ Hotline had a useful role to play in protecting victims.

2.4 Setting up the technical infrastructure

It unfortunately turned out that it was not possible to have a number which could be used throughout Europe. This meant that we had to use a specific number for each of the countries selected for testing: Austria, Germany and Luxembourg.

The number had to be easily recognisable, which is why we decided to use a vanity number. The number 439258 corresponds to the letters G-E-W-A-L-T on the telephone keypad and spells the German word for violence.

On the basis of a duty roster, all numbers were to be re-routed to the telephone counsellors on duty at the time.

One day ‘on call’ (10.00 – 20.00) was divided into two five-hour shifts. Every day there should be two counsellors on call to man the Hotline.
We equipped each telephone counsellor with a mobile phone and a headset so that he would have no difficulty in looking up a telephone number for referral or filling in the caller questionnaire while on the telephone.

The calls were diverted to redirect callers through to the telephone counsellors on duty. The technology used to do this proved to be extremely unreliable and highly susceptible to interference, but for financial reasons it was not possible to change to a more reliable system.

We encountered huge difficulties setting up the telephone network across national borders, starting with the fact that it is still not possible in the EU to get a single number for the whole of Europe. The cost of setting up the Hotline number differed between the countries from costing nothing to €10 000. In Austria the number we wanted could only be activated after months of negotiations. This was a major factor in the postponement of the test phase.

As regards the address for the planned website, we finally realised that the new EU domain would not be activated during the time allocated to the project. We therefore decided on the domain www.gewalt-hotline.net and used it to host a client-specific website and integrated chat room.

2.5 Selecting the Hotline counsellors and providing training and further training

The overwhelming majority of violent acts are committed by men, and EuGeT took account of this in its approach. Violent men can turn more easily and more openly to a male counsellor for help with their difficulties. For this reason, only men were considered for the job of telephone counsellor.

The Hotline is a service for violent men who might also be ringing up in acute situations to ask for help with their violence. If the telephone counsellor intervened in the wrong way this could endanger the victim or victims. We are dealing with an area fraught with difficulties – a violent clientele – and there was a high potential for risk.

This meant that the counsellors had to be highly qualified and trained in counselling violent clients. In addition to their basic profession as social workers, they should also have undergone a special three-year in-service training course for work in this type of field. They must also show that they have experience in counselling this type of client.

As it is an umbrella organisation the EuGeT knows experienced violence counsellors and we were able to fall back on this pool of resources. We wrote to 256 people.

We were looking for an institute offering further training, and which had years of experience in extra training for people working with violent offenders. The Krabbe Institute was just what we were looking for.

The first seminar took place from 12 to 16 October 2003 with 17 prospective telephone counsellors. A further seminar for people interested in becoming telephone counsellors was held in February 2004. An additional 11 participants were given further training to become telephone counsellors.

The project's hierarchy of objectives required counselling to be carried out with specific aims in view. Optimally, the caller was supposed to seek face-to-face counselling after the telephone interview. The caller should also not just be given a number because then he would have to call again. We feared that many callers would not be able to summon up the courage to call a second time.

For this reason we preferred a different approach, where the telephone counsellor should give the caller the option of being transferred to a counsellor. He should ask for the caller's name and telephone number and pass on this information together with the background information to the
local counsellor responsible so that, no later than two days after the call, the counsellor could contact the client.

This completely new approach confused the telephone counsellors. This direct approach to clientele is unusual in the social sector. Several of the telephone counsellors were still unable to adopt this approach by the end of the test phase and referred the callers to a counselling service. This approach made the referral quota much lower.

Since a counselling session or counsellor would not be available locally for every man who called up, we developed an alternative. The telephone counsellors were to offer the men who called personal counselling over the telephone. These calls were not to be made over the Hotline so that it would not be blocked for other callers. Four callers took up this offer.

As the caller can very easily break off communication simply by putting the receiver down whenever he wants, telephone counsellors had to be able to make contact more than just once. They had to maintain contact too, and if there is a danger of the caller breaking off contact, they must be able to re-establish it.

The person running the accompanying research introduced the telephone counsellors to the evaluation design and familiarised them with the requirements for filling out the accompanying form. After some initial doubts the future telephone counsellors were convinced they would be able to obtain the necessary data at the same time as counselling. The telephone counsellors were asked whether they wanted to work on the chat room, but showed little interest.

2.6 Accompanying evaluation

The accompanying research focused on the examination and evaluation of the Hotline for violent men, i.e. on the Hotline's achievements and the quality of its telephone counselling, public relations and advertising work in the test regions, as well as the choice of Hotline counsellors, their training and further training.

There are other project goals which, together with their evaluation, are not being researched. These include setting up a database to aid the referral of offenders, chat room counselling or holding a specialist conference.

The aim was to assess the success and effectiveness of the research as regards two key research issues in the pilot project:

1. violent men in the “dark field” do also, under certain circumstances, take up the offer of counselling and therapy;
2. the telephone Hotline is a low-threshold approach, appropriate for the violent men in the “dark field” at which it is aimed.

The scientific accompanying research investigated both of these assumptions. The number of calls was not the most important focal point in this respect. Attention was focused far more on whether the Hotline was used at all by its target audience. Can the Hotline be a new way for its clients to change themselves? Can callers be motivated to also seek face to face counselling? The test phase was in any case too short for any quantitative conclusions to be drawn.

“Introducing a completely new product onto the market must be treated as a long-term project”, the advertising agency urged as early as the development stage of the public relations work. The estimated budget for this was far beyond our financial means.

These assumptions were tested within the framework of the evaluation, firstly through a quasi-experimental comparison between those seeking help who first contacted the Hotline and those who went straight to one of the counselling services' offices. Secondly, it was possible to judge the appropriateness of the Hotline, especially for “dark field” offenders, by comparing incoming calls to
the Hotline with ensuing initial counselling sessions attended by the callers, and by analysing the Hotline’s infrastructure and the quality of Hotline counselling.4

In order to compile the accompanying research, the telephone counsellors had to fill out the caller questionnaires while on the telephone. Using headsets and specially designed record sheets enabled them to do this. However, the counsellors’ priority was to provide the counselling, which meant that some questionnaires were not fully completed.

2.7 The test phase for the Hotline

Due to limited resources, and for the purposes of testing, the Hotline could only be introduced in certain regions and not nationally throughout the participating countries. We decided to test the Hotline in three different regions: in a large city, a federal state with institutions already offering counselling to offenders, and a country with hardly any such provision.

Each collaborating partner was responsible for public relations work in their respective areas. In Luxembourg and Upper Austria they were able to obtain substantial funding to advertise the Hotline to the public or make this available from their own budget. Only the project partner MgM Hamburg made no funds available for this.

At the start of the test phase we organised press conferences at all three locations. In both Luxembourg and Austria we were able to present the Hotline within the framework of events organised by their Ministries of the Interior. In Hamburg, the Senator for Social Services and Family Matters, Ms Schnieber-Jastram, acted as patron. There we also informed the press of our activities at a press conference at the beginning of December 2003. In tandem with this, we sent out mailings with information on the launch of the Hotline to the media across Germany.

Several interesting experiences were made during the test phase:

- We received a number of calls from professionals. They responded very positively to our idea and asked whether the service was also available in their town. Could they also put posters up? Is there a counsellor in their town? What do you do when someone calls?

- The police also showed a great deal of interest in the Hotline. They brought to our attention how valuable this offer also is for men who are known to be violent, namely “bright field” offenders. As a result of this, towards the end of the project we came up with the idea that when the police were involved in a situation they could give the offenders small contact cards with the Hotline number.

- The telephone counsellors found waiting for the calls very hard. Being on standby and then not being needed proved to be trying. Sitting alone and not receiving any calls – not being needed – led to feelings of great self-doubt in many counsellors. Consequently some counsellors dropped out despite feeling that the Hotline had an important role to play.

- The counsellors took their work very seriously and, we would particularly like to stress, were fully committed, conscientious and competent in providing this service. They were the solid foundation for the test.5

- The telephone counsellors often asked us for supervision immediately after the calls. It is now standard practice in therapeutic institutions for counsellors to reflect on their own actions and to examine what passes between a person at a moment of extreme need and his counsellor. This prevents the client from being burdened with unpleasant personality traits, with the result that the counsellor himself appears the “better” man. There is a danger here for counsellors. There is also a danger that they will feel that their challenging work makes excessive demands on

4 See research report.
5 Annex: one counsellor’s amusing experience
them, with the result that they demand too much of themselves and suffer from burnout. As the Hotline was a new project it was not possible to predict what the counsellors would experience. Due to the nature of the work it was inappropriate to wait for monthly supervisory meetings as is otherwise standard practice in the social sector which is why we did not hold the supervisory seminar as planned, but rather offered ad hoc supervision.

- The counsellors found that interaction over the telephone differed greatly from the counselling sessions they were used to. On the one hand they had to work harder on making contact so that any contact was established at all and did not break off. Only then did the caller feel he had come to the right place, that here he had found someone competent he could talk to. It was only at this point that he became ready to open up about his embarrassing problem. On this basis the telephone counsellors could then work to successfully motivate him to seek face to face counselling. The counsellors’ extensive knowledge about the mindset of violent men enabled them to get to the point within a short space of time. This is why the average length of an offender’s call was only eight minutes. Having clear interventions with a high degree of competency in the problem was the key to continuing the counselling.

- Referring the caller involves more than simply giving him a phone number. As time went on the telephone counsellors increasingly took on more of the work involved in making contact with counsellors or counselling services. The handover must work well, the local counsellors immediately make contact with the client and quickly fix an appointment. The success of the referral definitely depends on this.

2.8 Integrating the service into the work of existing institutions for counselling offenders (sustainability)

As a low-threshold service for working with offenders the Hotline is the first of its kind. It is easier for offenders to call a hotline than arrange an appointment with a counselling service. A counselling service is always associated with the need to appear in person and therefore lose your anonymity. This hurdle is often high enough to prevent offenders from getting in contact.

No counselling service, and certainly no one individual counsellor, can be so widely accessible in person. Normally they resort to using an answering machine. The Hotline could be called every day, seven days a week between 10am and 8pm. Outside these 70 hours when the phones were manned, callers could use an answering machine. Not one single caller left a message. This proves just how important it is for these clients to be able to get through to an actual person.

As the Hotline was accessible for long periods of time, counselling services and counsellors also found it a useful service, something which surprised us. The Hotline actually helps to solve a typical problem for counselling services by taking calls when counsellors have an appointment and cannot answer callers in person. An administrator, who at best mans the phone, is not able to hold the motivating initial conversation which is needed with violent men.

At the end of 2004, 15 counselling services in Germany, Austria and Luxembourg had decided to use the Hotline service for themselves. The Hotline is particularly beneficial when new counselling provision is made or when counselling services are looking for new clients, so we plan to extend the network.

The test phase was originally planned for six months. However, even during this period we realised that we would achieve our aim of reaching men from the “dark field”. This is why we decided to extend the test phase until the end of the project. Advertising obviously had to be continued throughout the extended test phase and the telephone counsellors also had to be paid. After consulting with the Commission it was possible for us to cover this with funds which had not yet been used.
The Hotline developed advertising material and ensured accessibility, opening up the possibility of completely new offers and even putting them into practice: even with a low number of hours trained violence counsellors can also offer counselling in their own practice. Through this new services can be developed for offenders, despite it being highly unlikely that funding would be provided for a whole counselling service. In most cases the men would pay for the counselling themselves through the calls made to the Hotline. Violence counselling is no longer only provided for peripheral social groups but for the average citizen.  

2.9 Internal evaluation meetings

The project managers presented the progress made by each of the Hotline projects at the EuGeT’s biannual internal evaluation meetings. The partners received detailed descriptions of the current state of affairs. As they are also involved in counselling men who commit domestic violence, they were able to contribute to the learning process.

The first control meeting was held between 30 April and 2 May 2003 in Salzburg. A business consultant explained to us the various possibilities for advertising and professional marketing strategies. Our target group is unknown and inconspicuous but at the same time is supposed to admit to serious offences. This is a challenge for any advertisement.

It is also very difficult to get financial help for work with offenders. Donors are very generous when it comes to animals and children, but even victim support groups find it more difficult, so who is going to give money for offenders? If a man gives public support to the need for working with offenders, he risks being labelled as one of the offenders himself. However, it is impossible to work with offenders, as the Hotline does for example, unless there is considerable financial support.

Following the seminar for the telephone counsellors, the second control meeting was held between 16 and 18 October 2003 in Timmendorf near Lübeck. Telephone counselling had taken shape in the seminar and was now a reality which could be, and had been, put into practice. Future telephone counsellors had simulated interventions in role-play situations, had developed them and finally tried them out. Having done this, we fine-tuned our further work with callers. These results were presented to EuGeT and discussed with the participants.

We discussed expanding the Hotline to other countries at the third control meeting held in Nordhorn between 22 and 23 January 2004. For this reason EuGeT had invited representatives from Switzerland. This meeting focused on sustainability and several models for integrating the Hotline into the psychosocial network were developed. We took up this idea and prepared the basis for an independent promoting company to run the Hotline in the long term with the help of a business advisor.

We presented the promoting company set up for this, EuLine, at the fourth partners’ meeting held in Nordhorn between 4 and 5 November 2004. The partners approved continuing to operate the Hotline through EuLine. The partners felt that the EU offenders’ Hotline project had been a success. The project managers thanked them for their support.

2.10 The project partners’ activities and contributions

All the project’s partners were very keen to try out the Hotline in their regions. But the test locations had to be very committed and raise a considerable amount of funding. As advertising costs and the telephone counsellors’ salaries were not covered by the EU budget during the test phase from

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6 See the report “Men’s work in Austria” (Männerarbeit in Österreich) published by the Federal Ministry for Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection (BMSG), Vienna, 2004. This study notes that clients of public counselling services have a higher level of income than average.
1 December 2003 to 31 May 2004, these had to be raised by the test regions themselves. For this reason some collaborating partners were immediately ruled out as possible locations.

Vorarlberg: IFS - Klartext
Vorarlberg is a rural area. It became clear during the discussion that Vorarlberg is a relatively closed system in relation to the outside world with people only turning to counsellors when they know them personally. The collaborating partners felt that men would not be attracted by a far-away, anonymous telephone counselling service. We therefore considered Vorarlberg to be unsuitable for an initial test project.

Beraadslagkantoor voor Mannen en Jongen, Netherlands
Working with offenders is a relatively widespread phenomenon in the Netherlands. Dutch experience and skills, for instance, contributed to the training of our telephone counsellors. Nevertheless, we decided against trying out the Hotline in the Netherlands, as our collaborating partner felt the chances of obtaining sufficient financial support for the necessary public relations work were slim.

Just how difficult the situation was for this collaborating partner is illustrated by the fact that the institution has since been closed.

Hamburg: Men against male violence (Männer gegen Männer-Gewalt®)
In contrast to the above, Hamburg offered us top-quality conditions, providing the necessary professional and staff resources. Hamburg Senate indicated its support, the Senator said she was prepared to act as patron, and so we made a joint declaration in favour of Hamburg as a test location.

Unfortunately, our collaborating partner was unable to raise the money for advertising. There was no Hotline application.

For this reason the poor results achieved in Hamburg came as no surprise, but were nevertheless very disappointing. We had expected a better response from this location in particular. But this proved that, if no-one knows about the Hotline no-one can call it.

The Hotline was publicised in Hamburg only through the huge commitment of other institutions and individuals. Adverts were distributed through private contacts, and with these limited funds we received a notable response. One has to ask what would have been possible had we received more support.

Upper Austria: Federal State Family Therapy Centre (Familientherapiezentrum des Landes)
The director of the Family Therapy Centre managed, through his huge personal involvement, to gain widespread support for the Hotline project. Extensive public relations work was set in motion at the launch of the project.

In addition he worked to persuade counselling services to become referral services for the men who call, and to take part in the accompanying evaluation.

They have contributed valuable insights to the Hotline's blueprint and its advertising concept. Despite a lot of effort being put into advertising in Upper Austria, the number of callers was disappointingly low. We took up this issue repeatedly during several meetings with the director.

In anticipation of extending the Hotline beyond 2004 we noted that it took far longer for the adverts to show any effect. To date (spring 2005) we have received significantly more calls from Upper Austria than during the test phase.
**Salzburg: Men against male violence (Männer gegen Männergewalt®)**
The project partner decided not to carry out a test project in Salzburg, because the counselling office there is already working at full capacity and because of the difficult financial situation. They supported the Upper Austrian test location, which borders on their region.

Both Vorarlberg and Salzburg are supporting the Austrian test location through their political contacts at federal state and at national levels.

**Bielefeld: Men against male violence (Männer gegen Männergewalt®)**
The counselling office has a wealth of experience in counselling sexual abusers. This experience was tapped during the development of the Hotline and in developing our approach to sexual abusers. Our collaborating partner co-operated with an agency in developing the advertising concept. In addition, Bielefeld placed offices and technological infrastructure at the project's disposal.7

As very little advertising was done in Hamburg, Bielefeld decided to advertise in its region. Adverts were distributed, posters put up, a cinema advertisement made for arts cinemas and contact made with the local media. Just one article in the local Saturday newspaper prompted three men to call the following Monday. Two of these went for counselling the same week.

**Luxembourg: Planning familial**
From the start, the collaborating partner was very interested in setting up the Hotline in Luxembourg too. Despite a lack of infrastructure for working with offenders, the collaborating partner managed to provide enough funds to pay the telephone counsellors' salaries and make an application. The collaborating partner's representative has publicised the project intensively at political level. There was initial interest in and support for dealing with offenders from the “dark field”, but unfortunately the policy favoured working with “bright field” offenders. This meant that a further application could be made only under tougher conditions. This explains why calls were made to the Hotline at the beginning but that the service became less, not more, well known and consequently why we later stopped receiving calls from Luxembourg.

2.11 Evaluation of the project
The first seminar was held from 12 to 14 November 2004, one week before the Christkindl's Market started, and was attended by the project partners, telephone counsellors, the project management and the scientific directors of the accompanying research. They met to assess the experiences made and results achieved during the first and the extended test phases of the Hotline.

The main focus of the seminar was on advertising.

Taking a direct and non-moralistic approach in the form of a question was widely approved. The choice of photos which focused on the longing for a ‘whole’ family unit and which were eye-catching at the same time was also deemed to be a positive one.

It was later decided that the slogans used in the first campaign were too unclear and not sufficiently “to the point”. The slogans used in the second campaign were targeted better at the men’s feelings: self-esteem, trust, fear, love. The topic of violence was emphasised more clearly by the postscript. The stigmatising effect of the working title “Hotline for violent men” was over-emphasised by having it on the posters, and the title was removed. However, including the direct appeal to get in touch was considered sensible.

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7 See proposal: Contribution in kind
We summarised the results of this discussion in revised form in the enclosed online flyer. This was available from December 2004 for the Hotline application.

The individual experiences made by the telephone counsellors during their shifts manning the phones were characterised by the tense wait for a call to the initial contact with an offender from an unknown place and possibly from a different country, and the first referral to a counselling service. The counsellors asked themselves whether they and the callers would understand each other, whether their lists were up to date, whether there was a counselling service local to the caller, whether they would be able to convey trust, whether the caller would be prepared to attend violence counselling, whether there would be a “follow-up session” in a counselling service and whether he would start violence counselling. The telephone counsellors’ valuable experiences will help to shape the training for the counsellors and future work on the Hotline.

The innovative nature of this project and its scope was impressed upon all the participants particularly by the emphasised fact that this is a pilot scheme – according to Evolog’s calculations there is no similar scheme anywhere in Europe. The key question in the research contract – is a hotline a suitable approach to violent men? – can clearly be answered yes.

Future prospects

The project leaders informed all those present about EuGeT’s decision to continue the Hotline after the project phase had ended. A promoting company, “EuLine”, was founded to do this. EuLine will further develop the Hotline from 2005 and work closely with EuGeT to establish this low-threshold access for violent men as a permanent service in the German-speaking area.

Many trained violence counsellors found that the Hotline was a useful resource in attracting clients. Neither counselling services nor independent violence counsellors are able to have such a wide telephone presence or always be available in person. Because violent men extremely rarely leave a message with their name and telephone number, the Hotline offers the ideal solution. A man who calls the Hotline is referred to the nearest counselling service or violence counsellor. The initial contact is professionalised and streamlined.

Lastly, clarification was needed as to which of the telephone counsellors would continue to cover the shifts on the Hotline from January 2005. Most of the telephone counsellors were very keen and interested in continuing to work on the Hotline in the future. A further level of training for telephone counsellors was also proposed in order to further expand the network of telephone counsellors.

After the demanding and productive working day, the last two years of our work together on the vision of a pan-Europe Hotline for violent men was celebrated with a feast fit for a king in an old Nuremberg cellar restaurant.

3 RESULTS AND EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

3.1 Telephone counselling as a distinct form of counselling

Counselling offenders over the telephone has, wherever possible, one objective, namely to persuade the caller to seek face-to-face counselling, requiring the counsellor to intervene differently during the call. This means that counselling offenders over the telephone merits its own qualification, it creates a distinct type of counselling. This enabled us to achieve our objective far better that we had originally thought and used it to successfully able to refer offenders to counselling services during the test period.
3.2 Establishing counselling provision in Innsbruck
A direct result of the Hotline in terms of sustainability is that counselling provision for offenders has been established in Innsbruck. The three counsellors from the Innsbruck area got to know each other at the seminar for telephone counsellors and subsequently developed the idea of a joint “Practice for violence counselling”. This practice started work and is now part of the psychosocial provision in South Tyrol. The practice attracts clients mainly through the Hotline.
While building up the practise the counsellors received – for the first time in Austria – national recognition of their qualifications as violence counsellors. That is also a success for the Hotline.

3.3 Establishing counselling provision in Luxembourg
One of the collaborating partner’s reasons for taking part in the project was to inject new life into the work with offenders in Luxembourg. The accompanying events and advertising for the Hotline made a significant contribution to setting up the first violence counselling service in Luxembourg.

3.4 New provision for counselling offenders: violence counselling practices
With the help of the Hotline, individual counsellors and therapists have set up practices aimed at this area. The advertising material for the Hotline and its availability provide the ideal conditions for building up a violence counselling practice. The central issues of the initial phase – public relations work and acquiring clients – are resolved by the Hotline. In the long term this has meant that for the first time it has been possible to have a widespread network of counselling provision for offenders.

3.5 Chat room
The chat room was an interesting idea which could be put into practice with relatively little effort. Unfortunately we noted that during the first three months none of the visitors used the chat room. For this reason we closed the chat room at the end of this period. We are currently discussing how the chat room could be publicised.

3.6 Setting up EuLine, operating the offenders’ Hotline in the long term
Even the advertiser brought to our attention that more than six months was needed for the initiative advertising phase. We thought a six-month trial phase was too short, and sponsors also signalled that they would only advertise if the Hotline were not going to be closed in just half a year.
The second defining experience was the success of the Hotline. “Dark field” offenders called in and could be motivated to seek counselling.
This is why we decided to extend the test phase until the end of the project and at the same time widen the catchment area of the Hotline.
The telephone counsellors’ experience that, for example, it really was possible to persuade a caller to seek counselling, or that a newspaper article on the Hotline resulted in offenders calling up straight away, made everyone involved want to see the Hotline established on a permanent basis. As EuGeT is an umbrella organisation and does not want to be a promoting company for institutions, we established our own representative – EuLine – and took over the permanent operation of the Hotline on 1 January 2005.

3.7 Linking into the network
The Hotline refers violent men to counsellors and counselling services. The more institutions are involved, the easier and more successfully offenders can be referred for counselling. The Hotline is a network which can be relatively easily expanded within the countries which already take part and

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a Annex: Advert painted onto the car of an independent violence counsellor
extended to new ones. In this way every qualified institution can be quickly integrated into the network.

3.8 Advertising in the "bright field"
We developed contact cards in collaboration with the police, as has already been mentioned with regard to the experiences made during the test phase. These are already available and are handed out by the police to offenders in cases of domestic violence. However, these contact cards came too late for the EU Hotline project.

3.9 A new advertising concept for offenders
Advertisements on the topic of domestic violence mainly follow three basic concepts:

1. Violence is scandalised.
   Violence is portrayed as despicable, something which must not be allowed to happen. Most offenders would agree with this, but they do not relate this to themselves. They are not violent of course, just “lash out sometimes”.

2. Offenders are ostracised.
   This divides the world into good and bad — such as violent – people. Because nobody wants to be one of the “bad” people, a man doesn’t distance himself from his violence, but rather from the idea that he is one of those who commits acts of violence. Those people are “beaters”, “sadists”, and he’s certainly not like that.

3. Victims in adverts for offenders.
   Focusing on victims is supposed to make an impression on offenders. As the offender sees it he was “just defending himself” and only used “justifiable retaliatory force”. In short, the offenders are the “actual” victims. They are “wound up”, “provoked”, they were “pushed too far”. But of course that only applies to themselves, which is why the portrayal of victims has nothing to do with their own violent behaviour.

These strategies do not reach offenders.

For the first time the adverts for the Hotline appealed directly to the offenders. This was a completely new approach. The offender is named as an active person. The new advertising concept is directed at the offender through the discrepancy between his longing for a happy relationship and his violent behaviour. This discrepancy creates a tension in him which pushes him to act and change. Pressure exerted from outside will not motivate him but only makes him avoid the issue. However, inner tension cannot be avoided but, unlike external types of punishment, is always carried with you. The majority of “explanations” for violence given by offenders show just how much the inner tension affects them and gives them no inner peace. In our advertisement we focused on this inner discrepancy and presented the Hotline as a practicable way out.

3.10 Publicity!!!
We observed and experienced that violent men did use the Hotline. Just how much the Hotline is used depends on the scale of the advertising. We were able to achieve the necessary quality for the Hotline and even the advertising. Quantity is now necessary for widespread use as the best billboard or the most convincing TV advert can only have an effect if it is published and broadcast. A big – and costly – advertising drive is needed for a new service to be publicised.¹⁰

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¹⁰ One recommendation made by the advertising agency regarding the launch of the Hotline was to book hoardings across the country: the budget required for this in Germany was approx. €1.8 million.
4 PUBLICATION AND PROSPECTS
All the interim results can be accessed on the www.gewalt-hotline.net website. All results will be published on the sites www.EuLine.net and www.euget.org. A bound copy will be produced and sent to interested parties.
We are and have been reporting on the project and the experience we have gained at public events and at specialist congresses.

We point out that we are sponsored by the European Commission’s Daphne programme in all advertising media, publications and lectures.

The Hotline was also reported in the national media. As a result callers also phoned in from outside the test regions. Some of these clients could not be referred to a counselling service. Further counselling services must be set up to cater for these needs and thus to prevent more violence. But specialists in the psychosocial area must first be motivated to turn their attention to working with offenders because it has a negative image. They must also be sufficiently qualified to take on this work. A broadly-based training drive is needed to this end.
We have already submitted an application regarding this.

Alongside the geographically broad expansion in German-speaking areas, other countries have shown a great deal of interest in the Hotline, particularly Estonia and Poland. Integrating new linguistic areas is a huge challenge for us. Linked to this is the question of the extent and quality of existing work with offenders in these countries. We would like to work to expand this within the context of the Daphne programme.

This service is also being developed in Hungary. The local promoting company has invited us to work with it as a collaborating partner. We gladly took up this offer.

Almost as many victims as offenders called the Hotline. This and the feedback and discussions we have had with the professionals gave us the idea of opening a “violence hotline” which would also counsel victims.

Last but not least is the issue of publicity. We have developed and optimised materials, but need adequate funding to achieve widespread publicity. Raising these funds is a huge job.

5 CONCLUSIONS
5.1 Summary
In our two-year project we developed, tested and optimised a hotline for offenders. Our target group were offenders from the “dark field” who carry out domestic violence, nearly 95% of the total target group of offenders. The basic questions of the project were whether offenders would accept treatment (consultation and therapy) if it were offered to them in the right way, and secondly whether the Hotline, as a low-threshold offer, is a concept which is able to reach our target group. Both questions could be answered with a “yes”! Offenders from the “dark field” called the Hotline and could be motivated to start counselling.

Because of these positive results the initial planned six-month test phase was extended to 13 months. The Hotline was finally set up permanently under its own promoting company, EuLine. For consultants, therapists and consultation offices who aim to work with offenders the Hotline provides a range of helpful resources such as
- a well optimized advertising campaign
- a network for the acquisition of offenders
- competent initial consultation on the telephone to motivate offenders and
- referral for face-to-face counselling

It is easy for institutions and consultants to become a part of this network. EuLine aims to actively expand the Hotline to other European countries.
## 6.1 Keywords

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<th>Beneficiaries</th>
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<td>Support to multidisciplinary networks</td>
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## 6.2 Materials

We developed the following materials during the course of the project:

- Brochures “Täterarbeit ist Opferschutz” (Working with violent men in order to protect their victims)
- Posters: Various motifs and slogans
- Postcards: Various slogans
- Website: [www.gewalt-hotline.net](http://www.gewalt-hotline.net)
- Research Report