



European  
Commission



## “LAWYERS NEED TO KNOW THERE ARE EUROPEAN LEGAL INSTRUMENTS TO USE WHEN REPRESENTING WOMEN AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE.”

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Fighting gender violence requires the full commitment of different professionals, among which are lawyers. This project aims to train lawyers at national level but also in relation to the relevant EU legislation, while at the same time giving them the benefit of the experience of other Member States. Training will be provided to 210 lawyers from seven different jurisdictions (Spain, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Poland, Northern Ireland and England & Wales).

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS JUST THAT: VIOLENCE. THAT'S WHY IT IS, FOR THE MOST PART, PUNISHABLE BY LAW IN ALL EU COUNTRIES.

However, as Vasileios Stathopoulos from the European Lawyers Foundation (ELF) explains, “legal codes are different in different countries; rules differ in their specifics, such as what constitutes violence and how it is punished. And,” he continues, “there are also legal standards related to violence against women in European or international law. Examples are the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Istanbul Convention, the European Protection Order and the EU Directives for victims of crime.”

But not all lawyers across the EU representing women who have experienced violence, or advising those who may be at risk of violence, know a great deal about this topic or the legal situation beyond their own country's legal framework. This is why the project TRAVAW was born: to educate lawyers from a range of EU countries about all the legal instruments that are available to them.

**NON.**  
**NO.**  
**NEIN.**

#SayNoStopVAW

# *"The taboo around violence against women needs to be broken."*

Panos Alexandris, Criminal lawyer and project expert, TRAVAW

The ELF is well placed to carry out the project. It is connected to lawyers' associations and bars in all EU member states, which helps them spread the word about their project. "We want lawyers across the EU to be familiar with both the national and international legal instruments at their disposal, to understand and compare different national legal frameworks, to identify problems and gaps in the legislation, and to exchange experiences and best practices in advising women who have experienced violence," says Vasileios, who manages the project.

With funding from the European Commission, TRAVAW will train 210 lawyers from seven jurisdictions within the EU (Spain, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Poland, Northern Ireland, and England and Wales) over the next year. It aims to teach them about the law in their own country as well as in some of the other participating countries, and to explain how EU regulations and international law can be drawn on in cases of violence against women.

What makes the training really unique, however, is that legal expertise is only one component of it. The organisers have taken the topic so much to heart that, in addition to legal experts, they make a point of also inviting practitioners from support organisations and women's NGOs to speak to the lawyers they train. In this way, participants find out – often for the first time – how widespread the problem of violence against women is, what common misperceptions are, how best to engage with women who are affected and many more practical insights.

Margarita Carballeda Pereiro, a Spanish lawyer from Ferrol who participated in TRAVAW's training in Madrid in spring 2017, says: "I was shocked to find that so many women in Spain, and even across the EU, experience violence – often from the people who are closest to them. I mean, it's 2017 and we're speaking of one in every three women!"

Her colleague, Germán Sánchez Díaz de Isla from Salamanca, feels that, "the most important part of the training in my opinion was the presentation by the women's organisation "Themis". I never really thought about how difficult it may be for women who have experienced violence to take legal action. Reflecting on this will change how I engage with them." In order to reach lawyers beyond the training participants and create a lasting legacy, TRAVAW will also produce a collection of articles (one for each participating jurisdiction) summarising the legal instruments, recent influential cases and other relevant information from this field. This will be available for download from the ELF website so that any legal professional can use it as a resource to draw on in their work.

## **MORE INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT**

[elf-fae.eu/travaw/](http://elf-fae.eu/travaw/)

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