

# DATE RAPE CASES AMONG YOUNG WOMEN: STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT AND PREVENTION

Final Results of a Project undertaken by Five European Countries

**DATE RAPE CASES AMONG YOUNG WOMEN**  
**STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT AND PREVENTION**

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**Coordinated by:**

The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS)

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This resource book is the result of a two-year project entitled “Date Rape Cases Among Young Women and the Development of Good Practices for Support and Prevention”, funded by the Daphne II Programme of the European Commission. The project was coordinated by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) in partnership with the Institute of Equality in Greece, the Coalition for Gender Equality in Latvia, the Women’s Issues Information Centre in Lithuania, and the Institute for Forensic Studies, University of Malta.

The project aimed to investigate the incidence of date rape among young women in five European countries including Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Malta and Lithuania, and to explore their attitudes, dating experiences and level of awareness. The project’s core activity was a quantitative and qualitative research study covering all partner countries which resulted in five country research reports. The objectives of the study were to investigate the incidence of date rape among female students in each participating country; explore the attitudes and experiences of female students regarding date rape; and develop recommendations, policies and strategies for victim support and the prevention of sexual violence and date rape.

The project emerged from an awareness of increasing reports of sexual violence among intimate partners, particularly young people, in the partner countries, as well as the recognition that sexual violence and rape are severely underreported crimes that are heavily shrouded in the taboos and myths associated with gender inequality and negative gender stereotypes. As a result, rape is an issue that has been given very little attention both on a policy level as well in research, and has been absent from national and European programmes on violence against women. Furthermore, the dominance of family violence or domestic violence within the violence against women agenda reveals a lack of awareness and understanding of the scope and nature of violence against women, and thus other forms of violence have not been adequately addressed.

## 1.2. Sexual Violence and Date Rape

According to the United Nations (2006), sexual violence is a form of interpersonal violence that has emerged as a social and a public health problem. Sexual violence includes abusive sexual contact, making a woman engage in a sexual act without her consent and attempted or completed sex acts with a woman who is ill, disabled, under pressure or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (UN, 2006).

Young people are more likely to experience sexual assault or violence (Rickert et al., 2005) and women are more commonly victims of sexual coercion and more extreme forms of it than men (Katz et al., 2002). Therefore, research among female adolescents and youth is of significant value in order to understand the root causes of gendered violence, to develop effective strategies for its prevention and to provide adequate support for victims.

Several definitions for date rape and acquaintance rape were found in the literature. The two terms are closely related and at times are used interchangeably. According to Rickert and Weimann (1998) *acquaintance rape* is considered to be nonconsensual sex between individuals who know one another before the sexual act. This relationship may be professional, platonic, dating or familial. *Date rape* is a subset of acquaintance rape, wherein nonconsensual sex occurs between two people who are in a romantic relationship (Rickert and Wiemann, 1998).

For the purposes of this project, it was agreed that a broader definition of date rape would be adopted that would reflect multiple forms of relationships between women and men and would not distinguish between acquaintance rape and date rape. Because this issue is being explored for the first time in the partner countries, a broader, more inclusive definition would allow for maximum disclosure of unwanted sexual experiences by young women participating in the project. Thus the following definition of date rape was adopted by the project partners for the purposes of this project:

**Date rape is a type of sexual assault, where the victim and the offender are or have been in, some form of personal social relationship, ranging from a first date to an established relationship (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2000).**

This definition views date rape as an act perpetrated by a social acquaintance, a friend, or a dating or intimate partner of the victim by the use of force or threat of force, but also through the use of other forms of pressure or coercion such as verbal pressure or misuse of authority (Koss, 1988).

### 1.3 The Resource Book

This study reveals that unwanted sexual experiences, violence, sexual violence and date rape exist in young women's relationships in all participating countries. Despite this, there is a general lack of awareness of this issue among young people as well as among relevant authorities and NGOs. There is a lack of information on sexuality, health, and gender at all levels of education which contributes to this lack of awareness and to an environment conducive to unhealthy, unequal, and violent relationships between women and men. Another important finding of this study is that date rape is a direct result of unequal gender relations and negative gender roles and stereotypes. Rape myths associated with gender norms and stereotypes that pervade our society at all levels condone sexually aggressive behaviour and a culture of victim blaming. Furthermore, the dominance of the family violence policy framework also creates a tremendous gap in the development of effective prevention and support measures for all forms of violence against women, including sexual assault and date rape.

The purpose of this resource book is to:

- Provide the background and results of the research study carried out within the framework of this project;
- Provide a resource document for social services, health professionals, relevant public authorities and NGOs related to sexual violence against women and specifically date rape;
- Promote cooperation and networking among relevant organizations;
- Reinforce discussions and further research on all forms of gender-based violence;
- Provide best practice examples and make policy recommendations for national and European authorities.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Worldwide

There is no estimate of the global prevalence of either intimate-partner violence or sexual violence. Estimates vary by country according to study methodology, and according to which behaviours or experiences are included in the prevalence estimate (WHO, 2007).

According to the WHO *Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women* the prevalence of intimate-partner violence and sexual violence varies widely between and within countries and is disturbingly high in many places. The study found that across the different study sites, between 13% and 61% of ever-partnered women reported physical abuse by a partner at some point during their lives, and lifetime prevalence of sexual violence by an intimate partner ranged from 6% to 59% (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005).

A substantial body of research exists in the United States on the prevalence of rape and date rape. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2000) one in six women has been the victim of a completed or attempted rape in their lifetime, including forced vaginal, oral or anal sex. Further, one in three American teenage girls who have been in a serious relationship reported that they were concerned about being physically hurt by their partner, and one in four teenage girls who have been in a relationship reported going further sexually than they wanted as a result of some form of pressure by their partners (Claiborne, 2006). Adolescent females and young adult women are four times more likely to be sexually assaulted than women in other age groups, usually by an acquaintance or date (Rickert et al., 2002). Furthermore, victims of dating violence are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour, unhealthy dieting behaviours, substance use and suicidal ideation/attempts. Both men and women can experience dating violence. However, the type of violence exercised by men and women is expressed differently. Women are more likely to be victims of sexual assault, rape or attempted rape, which represent specific forms of gender-based violence (Harned, 2001).

In Europe, much less research has been conducted on the prevalence of rape and sexual assault in comparison to domestic violence (Hagemann-White, 2001, Regan and Kelly, 2003). This means there is limited knowledge of the issue and therefore there is even less knowledge of date rape specifically. Very limited attention has been given to rape and sexual assault in national and European programmes on violence against women and they are often neglected in prevalence studies on other forms of violence against women. Many countries still cannot provide the most basic data on rape and sexual assault rendering rape essentially a 'forgotten issue'. However, it is widely accepted that these forms of violence are severely under-reported with estimates of reported rape ranging from 1-12% across Europe (Kelly and Regan 2001).

In recent years there has been increasing attention to cases of sexual violence involving the use of 'date rape drugs'. In light of this, the Council of Europe-General Assembly (2007) called on European governments to raise awareness among the general public and among responsible authorities about date rape drugs and the consequences of their use. The MEPs requested revised legislation on rape and sexual assault introducing a provision which requires the victim to have had the "freedom and

capacity to consent” to sexual relations, including in cases of intimate rape.

## 2.2 Cyprus

Human rights and women’s rights in particular are at a critical juncture in Cyprus. Cyprus’s recent accession to the European Union has accelerated the pace of legislative and legal reform on issues of equality and significant achievements have been registered in all areas. An impressive number of legislative measures relating to gender equality have been passed including the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law, 2002 (L.205(I)/2002), the Equal Pay Between Men and Women for the Same Work or for Work of Equal Value Law, 2002 (L.177(I)/2002), the Maternity Protection (Amendment) Law, 2002 (L. 64(I)/2002), the Parental Leave and Leave on Grounds of Force Majeure Law, 2002, (L.69(I)/2002), and the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Professional Social Insurance Schemes Law, 2002 (L.133(I)/2002), among others.

Furthermore, all National Development Plans since 1979 have declared the improvement of female participation in economic activity and society and the combating of discrimination against women as part of their objectives (MIGS, 2005).

There have been some important efforts by the government in Cyprus aimed at combating discrimination, such as creating the infrastructure for childcare facilities, providing training programmes, as well as improving institutional mechanisms in order to increase women’s participation and status in economic activity and in society as a whole.

The increased participation of women in public and political life and at the decision-making level has been identified as one of the priorities in the field of equality to which the Government committed itself at the Beijing Conference in 1995. All relevant stakeholders, including political party leaders and women’s organizations, have declared their full support for a further balancing of female participation in decision-making and politics (Cyprus Family Planning Association, 2006).

Despite these reforms many challenges remain and statistical evidence demonstrates that, although on paper Cyprus’s gender policies seem excellent, little has been done to actively promote these policies or to generate awareness of them. There has not been much dissemination of information to citizens relating to this new legislation, nor have employers, policy makers, or decision-makers been adequately trained and sensitised in order to effectively implement these measures (MIGS, 2006).

During the past few years, a number of agencies that aim to address gender inequalities have been established. These include the *National Machinery for Women’s Rights*, an instrument of the Ministry of Justice, established in 1994 that promotes gender equality in all aspects of life ([www.mjpo.gov.cy](http://www.mjpo.gov.cy)); the Committee on the Equality of Sexes in Employment and Vocational Training that aims to stimulate women’s active participation in the labour market; the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) that has the mandate to investigate complaints of sex discrimination; and the Advisory Committee on Domestic Violence, among others. Furthermore, several specialized NGOs are involved in promoting gender equality, such as the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies [MIGS], the Cyprus Family Planning Association, the Cyprus Gender Equality Observatory (CGEO), and the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family.

## Violence against Women

In recent years, there have been many positive developments with regard to increasing awareness and commitment towards preventing and combating violence against women - particularly domestic violence. The improved legislative framework that deals specifically with family violence and the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Family Violence, have both been welcome developments. Furthermore, a number of National Action Plans have been developed that address violence against women, including the National Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming, the National Action Plan for Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, and the recently completed National Action Plan for Violence in the Family. Despite this, efforts have focused almost entirely on 'family violence' which has not only rendered other forms of violence against women such as rape, sexual harassment, and others invisible but also reveals a lack of awareness and understanding of the scope and nature of violence against women (MIGS, 2006). Furthermore, the National Action Plans, although ambitious in scope, lack adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for their effective implementation.

In Cyprus no specific data on date rape exists and, as in most countries in Europe, little attention has been given to the issue of rape and sexual assault as compared to domestic violence. However, there are anecdotal reports of the existence of sexual violence in intimate relationships from organizations such as the Cyprus Family Planning Association and the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family.

Rape is a form of violence that is increasing; it is almost doubling every year. Most victims are young foreign women (female migrants and female tourists). According to the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics 2006 (percentage change of the rates for the years 1990-1996 and 2000-2003), Cyprus is the only country in Europe where the percentage change is 100 or more. Despite the prevalence of this form of violence, the issue of rape is not framed as a social problem in any policy or action plan. Furthermore, the gender neutral language used in many statistical reports renders invisible the fact that the victims of this form of violence are predominantly young women.

According to the Cyprus Police (2007) there has been a steady increase of reported rapes in recent years. In 2004, 41 rapes were reported, while in 2000 only 12 were reported. The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence (2007) has reported that in 2006 there were 11 cases of partner-violence (physical, sexual, and psychological), of which 8 were committed against unmarried women 18-30 years old. Although these numbers may seem low, underreporting may conceal the true extent of violence against women in Cyprus as they are often reluctant to report incidents of violence due to ingrained socio-cultural attitudes as well as economic inequalities (MIGS, 2006). Indeed, Cyprus boasts one of the lowest reporting rates in Europe. Socio-cultural factors such as the influence of the Church also have a significant impact on Greek-Cypriot adolescents' attitudes and beliefs (Kouta, 2003). Possible reasons for underreporting will be discussed below.

With regard to sexual and reproductive rights to which sexual assault and rape are directly linked, the Cyprus Government has no clear policy direction nor is there a National Action Plan on health. Although a Health Education Committee comprising government officials and NGO representatives has been established, it is currently inactive. There are no formal policies or action plans with regard to contraception, abortion and sex education for young people. Although sex education has existed



in the health education curriculum since 1992, it is still is not taught in all public schools.

State services for the support and protection of victims of violence such as shelters are inadequate and are limited to the funding of one NGO that suffers from limited resources and space. Specialised services targeting young people with regard to issues of sexuality as well as violence are non-existent in Cyprus, and although assistance may be sought in state hospitals, this is not a preferred option due to lack of privacy and anonymity. A limited number of NGOs, such as the Cyprus Family Planning Association and the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence, offers support to young people seeking information and assistance. There is one 24 hour helpline offering free advice and assistance to victims of family violence run by an NGO. However, no specialized services exist to offer support to victims of sexual assault and rape. Although young people have demonstrated some knowledge about sexuality, limited resources and services are available to them (Kouta, 2003).

### **Legislative framework**

There are several laws addressing the family: family/domestic violence, including sexual abuse (Article 119 (1) of 2000), forced marriage (article 150), fraudulent marriage (Article 178 and Article 180), and polygamy (Article 179). All of these acts are prohibited and the penalties for such acts are addressed in the various laws. The Marriage Law (law 21 of 1990) allows for civil or religious wedding (or both) and defines who is eligible to marry and who is not. The Divorce Law (1990) specifies proceedings and criteria for divorce.

These laws do not include date rape or sexual violence/rape under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Rape, including marital rape is punishable by law with a maximum sentence of life in prison and for attempted rape 10 years in prison. As noted above the law L. 47(I)/1994 recognises rape within marriage. Punishments for rape and other sexual offences defined by the Cyprus Criminal Law sound very strict on paper but in reality only very few cases of rape proceed to trial.

Section 144 of the Criminal Code CAP.154 states that *“Any person who has unlawful carnal knowledge of a female, without her consent, or with her consent, if the consent is obtained by force or fear of bodily harm, or, in the case of a married woman, by impersonating her husband, is guilty of the felony termed rape.”* Section 145 of the Criminal Code CAP. 154 states that *“Any person who commits the offence of rape is liable to imprisonment for life.”* Section 146 of the Criminal Code CAP. 154 states that *“Any person who attempts to commit rape is guilty of felony, and is liable to imprisonment for ten years.”* Section 153 of the Criminal Code CAP. 154 (*“Defilement of girls under thirteen (13) years of age”*) states that *“(1) Any person who unlawfully and carnally knows a female under the age of thirteen (13) years is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for life” and “(2) Any person who attempts to have unlawful carnal knowledge of a female under the age of thirteen (13) years is guilty of a misdemeanour and is liable to imprisonment for three years.”*

Cypriot legislation, as is generally the case in Europe as well as the United States, does not make a formal legal distinction between assaults committed by strangers and those committed by people known to the victim. However, date and acquaintance rape are prosecuted less frequently and punished less severely than ‘stranger’ rape. A study in Great Britain, for example, reported that acquaintance rapes were *“the most likely to involve withdrawal of the complaint; the most likely to be contested; and the least likely to result in conviction”* (Harris and Grace, 1999).

With regard to sexual and reproductive rights, the abortion law in Cyprus is permissive and restrictive at the same time. Abortion is prohibited except in cases where at least two medical doctors agree that continuation of the pregnancy would constitute a serious physiological or emotional hazard for the mother or child. Abortion is permitted in cases of rape, provided that a certificate from the appropriate police authority and a medical report is presented which states that the pregnancy was a result of rape and that its continuance would seriously harm the social status of the pregnant woman and/or her family.

### 2.3 Greece

No official statistical data exists in Greece regarding the prevalence of date rape, although studies referring generally to rape are available. Rape in Greece is considered an unjust act or crime against the woman and the law protects a woman's right over her own body and sexual freedom. The only case where the Greek Penal Code (P.C.) refers to sexual violence, without pointing out the sex of victim and perpetrator, is when referring to rape (Greek Penal Code, 1984).

According to Greek criminal law, rape is defined as an act in which someone uses physical force or the threat of significant or direct danger to force another to submit to, or participate in, unwanted sexual acts or debauchery.

It is important to point out that until the reformation of Family Law in 1983 (Greek Family Law, 1983) women were considered property of the family, whose master was the husband. In 1984, rape, according to Greek law, changed from being considered a moral or ethical crime, to being a crime against sexual freedom. Sexual freedom is divided into two fundamental rights: freedom of choice as to one's sexual partner, and freedom of choice as when to engage in sexual interaction.

Article 336 of the Penal Code (Greek Penal Code, 1984) that regulated the issue of rape until 1984, classified rape among "crimes against honour". After the modification of the Penal Code, on 16.03.1984 under Law 1419/84 (Greek Law 1419/84), the new article acknowledged rape as a "crime against the sexual freedom and [a] crime of economic exploitation of sexual life". However, rape is recognized only outside marriage. According to Article 336, par.1 of the Penal Code, "whoever, with the use of physical violence or with the threat of significant and direct danger, forces someone into *exogamous* sexual intercourse or in tolerance or enterprise of prurient action, is punished with imprisonment" (from 5 to 20 years).

The Penal Code also recognizes rape perpetrated by more than one individual, stating that "if the action of [the] previous paragraph was practiced by two or more perpetrators acting jointly, an imprisonment of at least 10 years is imposed" (article 336 par.2). It was not until October 2006 that marital rape became a criminally punishable offence and henceforth according to Law 3500 "On the confrontation of intra-family violence and other provisions" (F.E.K.232) the word "exogamous" is erased from the text of paragraph 1 of article 336 of the Penal Code.

According to research conducted by Angelos Tsigkris (1996), a lawyer who is involved in rape and sexual violence issues in Greece, only six rapes out of a hundred are reported to the Greek police. This percentage is one of the lowest recorded in international rape reporting figures. Furthermore, only one in one hundred cases ever reaches the courtroom. In Greece approximately 4,500 rapes

are committed annually, of which 270 are reported to the police. 183 of these result in the arrest of a suspect, 47 come to trial, 20 result in a conviction, and, finally, less than ten offenders are incarcerated for over 5 years (Tsigkris, 1998). Further, it has been found that rapes occurring in public areas are more likely to result in a conviction than those occurring in a private domain. Cases where the offender is unknown to the victim are also more likely to result in a conviction than cases where a prior connection exists (Tsigkris, 2000).

According to the report of the General Secretariat of Equality (Ministry of Interior Affairs) for the period 2004-2008, a four year Programme of Action has been implemented entitled “National Priority Policies and Plan of Action towards Gender Equality”. This programme focuses on the following issues: women and employment, women in power and decision making, combating stereotypes through education and combating violence against women.

### **Legislative Framework on Violence against Women**

- Law 3386/2005 “Entry, residence and social integration of third countries residence”. This law refers to combating trafficking in human beings and the protection of trafficking victims.
- Law 3064/2002 “On combating trafficking in human beings, of crimes against sexual freedom, child pornography, and financial exploitation of life”, FEK 248/15-10-2002.
- Law 3500/2006 “On the confrontation of family violence and other provisions”, FEK 232, 24.10. This law refers to domestic violence and the protection of women’s and children’s rights in the family.
- Law 3488/2006 “Implementation of equal access of women and men in employment, equality in vocational training and higher positions, as well as equality in working terms and conditions”. This law defines the term sexual harassment in the workplace, which is considered gender discrimination and provides for financial compensation to the victims. This law also refers to the elimination of all forms of gender discrimination in the private and public sectors, in access to work, as well as in working relationships.
- Article 336 Paragraph 1 of the Penal Code refers to rape, within or outside marriage.

Greece has ratified the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as the Optional Protocol, although it has yet to adopt the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Human Beings and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of 2005.

Currently the Greek Parliament is discussing a new legal provision that would allow for the implementation of more severe penalties in cases of the rape of minors.

## **2.4 Latvia**

In Latvia, there is limited research or data about violence against women; consequently, there are no general statistical data regarding sexual assault and rape, family violence, sexual harassment at work, prostitution and human trafficking. Cases of date rape have been anonymously reported to the mass media (the so called “female press”) but these cases are not evidence-based. Latvian Civil law Clause 2353 defines rape as “an act of sexual intercourse by means of violence, threats or taking advantage of the helplessness of the female victim”.



According to existing data, in 2004 447 women suffered from violence, 78 of them were murdered, 80 women suffered grievously bodily harm, 61 women and 266 minors (sex was not indicated) were raped and 228 women suffered from hooliganism (Women's NGOs Network of Latvia, 2005). These figures only indicate those crimes that have been officially reported and registered. As in other European countries, violence against women is severely underreported and it is believed that the real number of women who have suffered from violence is much higher. Approximately half of all crimes committed against women in Latvia take place in public, while the other half take place within the family.

Sexual harassment in the workplace, although illegal, is reportedly common. Cultural factors tend to discourage women from coming forth publicly with complaints of abuse. Victims of abuse are often uninformed about their rights and are reluctant to seek redress through the justice system. The recurrent violence, isolation and the threat of violence seriously decrease the ability of the victim to ask for assistance and to maintain a claim against the oppressor (Women's NGOs Network of Latvia, 2005). Both the police and the judicial system discount the seriousness of cases of violence against women.

Recent studies show some worrying trends:

- Every fourth Latvian inhabitant (24,7%) has stated that during their high school years they had experienced physical, emotional or sexual harassment from their peers. The majority of these cases were reported by young respondents (under 34 years of age).
- 28% of adult respondents have faced physical violence up to the age of 17, and 11 % of adults have experienced sexual harassment/ assault and 21% have experienced parental violence (threat to kill, to leave, etc.). Women are more likely than men to have faced sexual violence in childhood, although more men than women have suffered from physical violence in childhood.
- 29 % of respondents have faced physical violence by a partner and 22% of men have reported having been violent towards their partners.
- Higher anxiety levels are experienced by respondents who have faced physical or sexual violence outside of the family (i.e. in school, or on the street).
- Violence is highly correlated with alcoholism and unemployment rates which are strongly linked to the socioeconomic situation of the state. People from less developed regions report feeling more insecure.
- The studies of the last decade show that most rape cases are planned or premeditated, even in cases where women do not know the perpetrator.
- Over one third of Latvian inhabitants report that they know at least one woman in their circle of friends or relatives who suffers or has suffered from violence. A higher prevalence is seen in rural areas and low income areas.

Lack of specialized services for the support of victims allows for the continuation of a condemnatory attitude towards the victims of violence and delays or prevents victims from seeking assistance. At present there is no concerted effort or cooperative mechanism between relevant institutions and professionals working on issues of violence against women.

There was an attempt by Crisis Center "Skalbes" in recent years to set up the psychological support group for violent/ aggressive men but this was cancelled due to the lack of interest.

## Legislative Framework

Clause 2353 of The Civil Law stipulates that “if someone has raped a woman or copulated with her while she was unconscious he shall also provide her full compensation also for moral injury.” Compensation for non-material loss (moral injury) can be claimed only by natural persons. The Criminal Code specifically criminalizes rape but does not recognise marital rape (The Criminal Code of Latvia, Section 159). The applicable sentence is deprivation of liberty for terms of not less than five years and not exceeding twenty years. A separate section (161) is on sexual intercourse with a person who has not attained the age of sixteen years.

Within the last decade a slow increase in information exchange among professionals about violence against women can be observed. However, both international and local sources show that in the entire legal system, including the courts, there is a tendency to discount violence against a woman as a serious problem.

The Ministry of Legal Affairs offers free legal assistance to low income women for civil, administrative and criminal cases (consultations, preparing documents, legal advice and court representation).

There are only three shelters designed specifically for battered or abused women, only one of which is supported by the local municipality. NGOs provide women with consultations and other types of support. However, NGOs are limited by a lack of legal protection and financial resources. For example, in the capital city Riga, with a population of over one million inhabitants, there is only one shelter where homeless women with children may reside for up to 2 months. There are no specific rape or sexual assault hot lines; however, NGOs manage two crisis hot lines. There are no specially created shelters for women who are victims of sexual violence.

Violence against women is included in the relevant documents of Ministry of Welfare. The Ministry of Welfare is responsible for the implementation of gender equality and social protection policy. Yet, the government still does not have a united system and a common approach to combat violence against women. Among institutions and professionals who work in this area there is also a lack coordinated effort. In recent years NGOs have actively organized training for policemen and other professionals who are directly involved with violence victims. NGOs have reported that the police have tried to dissuade women from reporting family violence or rape and that they are unwilling to carry out arrests in such cases.

A serious obstacle in solving this problem is the lack of supportive legislation. Protection of the victim frequently remains the responsibility of the victim herself. Violence against women is not defined as a serious problem for which measures should be adopted and implemented by the government in cooperation with NGOs or other relevant institutions.

Sex education is mandatory in Latvian primary education (5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades) and for one year in secondary school. However, schools can refuse to give these lessons due to insufficient resources. As a recent study shows, frequently the quality of the training is low; the reproductive health is not been given satisfactory attention or coverage, and not enough appropriate information on sexual and reproductive rights is provided to young women.

## 2.5 Lithuania

Lithuania is a country on the Baltic Sea with a population of 3,384,900 of which 53.4% are females (<http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/>). Almost all the population is Roman Catholic.

Violence against women is one of the main problems women face in Lithuania. Unfortunately, there is no statistical data indicating how many women experience violence from their partner, or ex-partner. To fill the gap, two surveys on violence against women were initiated by the Women's Issues Information Centre. The first survey, "Violence against Women", was conducted in 1997-1998 by Dr. Giedre Purvaneckiene and was financially supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). A second study (including a national survey, content analysis, and focus group) was conducted in 2001-2002 by the public opinion and market research company, Spinter, and was supported financially by UNIFEM.

The main findings of the victim survey "Violence against Women" were as follows:

- 63.3 % of Lithuanian women have been victims of male physical or sexual violence or threats after their 16th birthday.
- 42.4 % of all married and cohabiting women have been victims of physical or sexual violence or threats of violence by their present partner.
- 53% of all women who had lived in relationships which had already terminated experienced violence or threats by their ex-partners.
- 11% of Lithuanian women had at least once, after their 16th birthday, been victims of male physical or sexual violence or threats perpetrated by a stranger, 8.2% by a friend, and 14.4 % by an acquaintance or relative.
- 71.4 % of Lithuanian women after their 16th birthday had been victims of sexual harassment or sexually offensive behaviour by a stranger, and 43.8% by a man known to them.
- 26.5 % of Lithuanian women after their 16th birthday had experienced sexual abuse by a stranger; 18.2 % by a man known to them; and 17% were victims of attempted coercion into sexual intercourse by their date.
- 10.6 % of the victims reported the most serious incident to the police.
- The vast majority (87%) of participants agreed that violence against woman in the family does exist in Lithuania.
- Only 1/5 of women reported that they had not experienced any of the actions mentioned above.
- 17% of the respondents reported that sometimes/often they are forced to have sexual intercourse against their will.
- 57% did not know about any forms of help or assistance available for women who have experienced violence.

([http://www.lygus.lt/ITC/files\\_smurtas/giedre1.doc](http://www.lygus.lt/ITC/files_smurtas/giedre1.doc) ).

The Government has approved the Strategy to Combat Violence against Women and Action Plan for 2007-2009 and it is currently being implemented. Shelters and crisis centres operate in Lithuania for women victims of violence and are run by NGOs. These centres also provide assistance and support to victims of rape and sexual assault. The oldest shelter for battered women, Pension for Mother and Child, was established by the World Bank and is fully supported by Vilnius Municipality. The

Municipality-run shelter in Vilnius has a 24-hour help line.

In Lithuania no specific data currently exists on date rape. There are only official statistics on reported rapes. According to the Lithuanian Statistical Department (<http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/>), rape and sexual abuse cases have been tracked since 1990. In 2004, 260 rape or attempted rape cases were reported; in 2006, 107 cases were reported. Regarding sexual abuse, in 2004, 128 cases were reported and in 2006, 64 cases were reported. These figures demonstrate an alarming decrease in reporting rates for rape. Further research on the reasons for underreporting is needed.

### Legislative Framework

Lithuania's legislation against rape was last revised on 05/07/2004. According to the opinion of law enforcement officials, the legislation is adequate. Despite this, there is no confidence in the law enforcement system or in the court system, and therefore victims often do not seek redress. These are three articles from Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania describing the punishment for rape, sexual abuse and forced sexual relations cases.

- Article No.149 addresses rape and states that “Any person, who had sexual intercourse against someone’s will, using physical violence or threatening to use it immediately, or by other means depriving that person from resisting violence, or by taking advantage of person’s helpless condition, is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years.”
- Article No.150 addresses sexual abuse and states that “Any person, who satisfied sexual needs with person against it’s will by performing anal, oral or other physical act, using physical violence or threatening to use it immediately, or by other means depriving that person from resisting violence, or by taking advantage of person’s helpless condition, is liable to arrest or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years.”
- Article No.151 addresses forced sexual relations stating that “Any person, who, by threatening to use physical violence or by using other psychical violence or person’s dependence, forced that person to have sexual relations or satisfy sexual needs in other forms with himself or other person, is liable to arrest or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years.”

## 2.6 Malta

Gender based violence has its roots in culturally-imposed gender stereotypes. Maltese society has its roots in Roman Catholicism, which, in turn, is permeated by patriarchy. Miceli (1994 in Sultana and Baldacchino, 1994:87) describes how the ‘old concept of patriarchal rule ... prevails’. In fact, Maltese citizens lead a ‘predominantly traditional way of life’ (Abela, 1992:19; Callus, 1998:94), forged on the ‘cult of masculinity’ (Walklate, 1995:117) and based on patriarchy. Earlier studies are supported by the findings of a study of gender equality and social policies in Malta. For example, Camilleri-Cassar (2005) finds that a critical prerequisite for gender equality in Malta would be rethinking men’s position in the family and in society. She argues that “the key to achieving gender equality is through actively promoting men’s involvement in household responsibilities, supported by policies that require changes in male lifestyle” (Camilleri-Cassar, 2005).

Clearly, gender-ascribed stereotypes in Malta link power to men. Malta’s male breadwinner model restrains Maltese society from readily accepting women in top posts and decision making processes.

Until relatively recently, it was unacceptable for men to engage in household chores or child care. Indeed, traditional gender roles are strongly embedded in Maltese culture and social norms (Camilleri-Cassar, 2005) and this may be the cause of gender based violence in Maltese society. However, Malta's membership in the European Union may be a catalyst for the move toward gender equality.

Maltese law recognizes civil and religious marriages, however, annulments by the Church and the State are not related and thus, are not necessarily granted in unison. Divorce and abortion are illegal in Malta. (<http://www.euroconsulta.com/jurisdictions/malta.htm>).

### **Legislative Framework**

Maltese law does not specifically refer to date rape. However, The Laws of Malta (Chapter 9 of the Criminal Code, Sub-title II - Of Crimes Against the Peace and Honour of Families, and Against Morals) clearly state that "Whosoever shall, by violence, have carnal knowledge of a person of either sex, shall, on conviction, be liable to imprisonment for a term from three to nine years, with or without solitary confinement". This criminal act is considered more serious if the victim is under age.



### 3. Methodology

This research study applied both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Triangulation was used to provide a wider perspective of date rape issues in each country participating in this study.

Quantitative methodology is used to test theories and hypotheses and to make generalizations that may contribute to the understanding of a condition or phenomenon and to the development of a theory (Creswell, 1994). On the other hand, qualitative methodologies may help achieve a more in-depth understanding of the subjective perceptions of young women (Sarantakos 1993).

For the quantitative methodology a structured questionnaire was used and for the qualitative methodology two focus groups were carried out, along with personal interviews with representatives of relevant institutions.

The structured questionnaire was distributed by simple random selection to female students between the ages of 18 and 24 enrolled in tertiary education. A specific calculation was applied ([http://www.researchsolutions.co.nz/sample\\_sizes.htm](http://www.researchsolutions.co.nz/sample_sizes.htm) ; <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>, 2003), with a 5% statistical error, according to the population data in each country.

The research instrument was based on instruments of previous research studies (Rickert et al., 2004; Zeitler et al., 2006). The data was analyzed with the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS) Version 10. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe, synthesize and draw conclusions. Several statistical tests such as chi-square were performed to meet the purposes of this study.

Regarding the focus groups, the following criteria were applied in order to select each participating group:

- Since date rape is a sensitive issue and may influence the response of each participant, and in the interest of maintaining privacy, participants in the same group were not related and were not friends.
- Participants were not from the same educational institution, did not follow the same course of study and were not the same age. This was done in order to have a broad perspective of opinions and experiences.

Focus group discussions were grouped into three main themes: awareness of date rape, dating relationships/unwanted sexual experiences, and support and prevention. These groupings provided a better understanding of participants' responses and helped to extract conclusions in association with the quantitative analysis of the study.

In addition, personal interviews of relevant institutions' representatives were carried out. Each interviewee was appointed by its organization as the person responsible for issues related to violence against women, date rape, rape or sexuality. The interviews and focus groups were transcribed and grouped into main themes based on the interview guidelines. Institutional interviews were grouped into three main themes: profile of organization, prevention and support of date rape/sexual violence, and needs in relation to the prevention of date rape and support to victims.

### **Questionnaire- total participants**

Cyprus: 476 female students

Greece: 478 female students

Latvia: 359 female students

Lithuania: 394 female students

Malta: 150 female students

**Two focus groups (total 10)** - Two discussions of 90 minutes each were carried out in each country. The discussions were facilitated by the researchers appointed by each partner institution and were tape recorded. Each group consisted of approximately 6-8 participants.

**Interviews with relevant institutions (total 27)** - 60 minute interviews were carried out with a representative of each institution facilitated by one researcher. The following organizations participated:

- Cyprus: Cyprus Family Planning Association, Association for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence, Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office Criminal Investigation Department (Cyprus Police), Cyprus Social Welfare Services (Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance), Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family.
- Greece: Hellenic Association for the Prevention of Sexual Abuse, Research Centre for Women's Affairs, Thessalonica's Women's Group (Omada Gynaikon Thesallonikis), Women's Movement in Panteleimona, Vlore Women's Union Greek Branch, Social Aid Hellas.
- Latvia: Crisis Centre "Skalbes", Resource Centre for Women "Marta", Ministry for Welfare, Latvian State Police, Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, Union of Latvian Psychologists.
- Lithuania: Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of the Interior, Vilnius Pension of Mother and Child, Kaunas district Women's Crisis Centre, Klaipeda Social and Psychological Service Centre, "Child House", "Save the Children".
- Malta: Malta Police, Agenzija Appogg (the National Social Welfare Agency for Children and Families), Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (now the Ministry for Social Policy), Merhba Bik (a shelter for battered women and their children).



## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Quantitative results - Questionnaire

Almost all of the respondents of the quantitative questionnaire in the partner countries were between the ages of 18-21 (84%) and were predominantly Christian, either Catholic or Orthodox.

An average of 62% of respondents in all countries reported having a current partner that they have known for more than one year. The average age of the respondent's partners was 21-22 years of age. Most of the participants reported that they considered their current relationship a serious one and that their partner was their exclusive sexual partner.

Furthermore, the large majority of respondents in all the partner countries described themselves as heterosexual.

#### *Dating relationships*

**Table 1:** Age of initial dating and age of initial sexual intercourse, per country

Country	Age of Initial dating	%	Age of first sexual intercourse	%
Cyprus	15-17	59.7%	16-17	18%
Greece	15-16	44.7%	17-18	42.2%
Latvia	16-17	40.7%	18	23.1%
Lithuania	15-16	43.9%	18	30.1%
Malta	14-16	58.1%	16-17	22%

Generally, the age of initial dating and sexual intercourse is similar in all five countries and this is confirmed in other similar studies (Brown and Flanigan, 2003).

This is an important finding and points to the importance of mandatory sex education in high schools in the partner countries. One of the findings of this study, as will be discussed below, is that introducing sex education early in secondary education is essential for young women and men to make better informed choices regarding their sexual and reproductive health and that it will also promote healthier relationships.

Participants reported that movie theatres/restaurants, clubs/pubs, friend's houses with a group and a date's house with a group or alone were the most frequent places for dating.

The majority (average=61%) of the participants from Cyprus, Latvia and Lithuania reported that their partner or date usually pays on a date, while participants from Greece (48.8%) and Malta (44%) reported a much lower percentage. Since most commonly their dates are males (the majority of respondents stated that they are heterosexual), this indicates a culture of male dominance,

culturally appropriate or expected in patriarchal societies. Often this is translated as ‘ownership’, meaning that the woman ‘owes’ her partner something. Thus, a perpetrator may use economic pressure on a woman during sexual activity, implying that he is entitled to sexual intimacy because he paid for dinner, drinks etc.

An average of 31% of the participants from Cyprus, Greece, and Lithuania reported having 2-3 alcoholic drinks during a date, while the number for Malta (41.2%) and Latvia was even higher (41.7%). In Latvia, 72.4% of the respondents consume light alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, etc.) during the dates, and 27.6% of the respondents reported drinking hard liquor (e.g. vodka, tequila, whiskey). With regard to drug use, the percentage in all the partner countries was low (an average of 5%), with the exception of Latvia which reported a higher percentage of 10.3%.

While drinking behaviour and drug use seems not to be a significant problem in most counties in the target group, one may argue that even consuming light alcoholic beverages and/or drugs may interfere with sexual communication during a date and may be associated with other forms of high risk behaviour. Furthermore, the literature indicates that incidents of sexual violence and date rape are more likely to take place in situations where alcohol and drugs are involved. For this reason, one of the recommendations to state authorities made during this project is the introduction of sex and health education in schools at all levels (primary, secondary, and tertiary) in order to raise awareness and promote informed choices related to sexuality, gender equality and violence prevention.

### ***Unwanted Sexual Experiences and Date Rape***

In four of the five countries in this study attempted rape and date rape was reported. Students from Cyprus reported more attempted and actual date rape cases, while participants from Lithuania and Malta reported only one case of date rape respectively (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Attempted rape and date rape, per country**

Country	My date TRIED to against my wishes		My date DID this against my wishes	
	Had oral sex	Had sexual intercourse	Had oral sex	Had sexual intercourse
<b>Cyprus</b>	2.9% (n=11)	1.3% (n=5)	1.9% (n=7)	1.9% (n=7)
<b>Greece</b>	3.4% (n=14)	-	1.5% (n=6)	0.5% (n=2)
<b>Latvia</b>	2.2% (n=7)	2.6 (n=8)	0.3 (n=1)	1% (n=3)
<b>Lithuania</b>	2,1% (n=6)	1.4% (n=4)	-	0.3% (n=1)
<b>Malta</b>	3.3% (n=4)	0.8% (n=1)	4.9% (n=6)	0.8% (n=1)

Despite a low number of reported date rapes during the research, a much higher incidence of other forms of unwanted sexual experiences was revealed in all countries, with Lithuania and Cyprus having the highest percentage and Malta the lowest. Cyprus, Greece and Lithuania reported more cases of unwanted sexual experiences (average 36 cases, 10%), while Latvia (33 cases, 10.6%) and Malta (20 cases, 16%). reported fewer. Other studies have also shown that asking a range of detailed questions using terms like ‘unwanted’ sex rather than just ‘rape’ results in much higher prevalence

findings (Walby and Myerhill, 2001). This can be attributed to victims not recognising the event itself as rape or as a crime.

The reported unwanted sexual experiences were often perpetrated by a person that the respondents considered to be their boyfriend, friend or sexual partner, and in most cases the respondent had known the perpetrator for a period of a few months to several years. Most incidents took place in a private apartment or in a nightclub. Almost half of those young women that reported experiencing unwanted sexual experiences during the research study had never told anyone and, notably, very few chose to formally report the event to an authority such as the police, or to a health professional, social worker etc.. The focus group discussions highlighted a general fear of disbelief among young women as well as a lack of confidence in the relevant authorities. This testifies to the lack of appropriate services for young women where they can seek confidential and quality assistance that incorporates a gender perspective, such as rape crisis centres.

All participants who reported unwanted sexual experiences also reported that their partners had been drinking alcohol and/or using drugs. It is evident that in all partner countries drinking and/or using drugs is common social behaviour, however it is important to point out that there is no *causal* link between alcohol consumption and drug use (on behalf of the perpetrator or the victim) and sexual assault (Russo, 2000). However, alcohol and drug use can reduce the capacity for the victim to resist unwanted sexual advances and can be used as an excuse to justify sexually aggressive behaviour. Thus, it is important to highlight this correlation in order to promote strategies that take these parameters into consideration.

Respondents reported giving in to sex play or sexual intercourse for a number of reasons, with the majority citing that they were overwhelmed by continual arguments and pressure, and fear of saying no and/or of their partner leaving them should they refuse. Interestingly, almost half of the women in Greece's sample were in relationships with men at least seven years their senior, with 24 women stating that they gave in to unwanted sexual intercourse with a person in a position of authority. There is no question that the results testify to male dominance in young women's relationships. The focus group discussions provided more insight into this, confirming women's lack of confidence, fear of abandonment, and need to satisfy and please their partners. Interestingly, physical or other coercive means did not figure as significantly as emotional and psychological pressure in any of the country studies.

### **Violent or Degrading Behaviour**

The general culture of male dominance in the relationships of young women in the partner countries was shown by the overwhelming number of respondents who reported other forms of violence in their relationships. These included psychological and emotional violence such as extreme jealousy, criticism, ridicule, and controlling behaviour such as making decisions for their partner, and demanding to know where they were at any given time. Extreme jealousy and controlling behaviour featured prominently across the partner countries revealing an overall male positioning as self-assertive, imposing and aggressive. This type of behaviour also reveals that traditional patriarchal notions of 'honour' are still alive and well in the partner countries. That is, that the honour and prestige of a man is intrinsically linked to the conduct of the women related to him and paradoxically, to his ability to violate the sexuality of other women. Less prominent but nonetheless significant were

reports of physical violence such as pushing and shoving, throwing objects, slapping and hitting.

## 4.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were based on three parameters: 1) Awareness of date rape and sexual assault 2) Dating Relationships/Unwanted Sexual Experiences 3) Support and prevention resources. It is important to mention here that all partner organisations found it difficult to commit students to attending the focus group discussions. Some reasons for this could be the sensitivity of the issue under discussion, the feeling that the issue did not apply to them, or an unwillingness to discuss issues considered personal with strangers. In all the partner countries, sexuality issues are generally taboo and limited research exists that addresses them. Date rape is an issue involving violence as well as sex, and this makes it an even more difficult topic of public discussion in patriarchal societies. This fact may also explain the low participation of young women in the focus group discussions.

Although most of the young women that participated in the focus groups seem to have some knowledge and understanding of gender based violence, the research revealed that there is a need for more awareness and education on issues of gender violence and sexuality issues in all the partner countries. All the country research reports revealed that rape and sexual assault and their consequences are taboo issues shrouded in silence.

The focus group discussions revealed that gender stereotypes and cultural understandings of 'male' and 'female' roles have a strong influence on young men and women's lives. Focus group participants in all the partner countries stated that women can and do behave and dress in 'provocative' ways. Some reported that although no form of dress or mode of behaviour can justify violence, there was general agreement that certain types of dress and behaviour can make women more vulnerable to being harassed or attacked. Participants agreed that women may not intend to be provocative, but may just be seeking attention and thus engage in behaviour that could be misunderstood, such as dancing on bars or rubbing up against men. Some young women stated that women have 'confused' men and that they give out unclear messages when they behave or dress in 'provocative' ways. According to the participants, women have the right to dress as they please, but their intentions in dressing 'provocatively' matter.

In terms of women's empowerment, participants of the focus group expressed the belief that women are now more confident and empowered than ever before. Interestingly, respondents seemed to think that this may create feelings of 'insecurity' in men and may cause them to be more violent in order to preserve their dominance. This corresponds to the current understanding of sexual violence and date rape as a manifestation of and a means to reinforce traditional gender roles (Jasinski, 2001).

Despite claiming more confidence and empowerment, the women interviewed expressed that establishing boundaries in relationships is difficult either due to lack of confidence, fear of abandonment, or guilt. They also found it difficult to establish limits in cases where they had already had sexual relations with their date in the past. They stated that they felt the need to 'please' their partners or dates, as well as 'guilty' for not satisfying their partner or for 'letting him down'.

Notwithstanding, the women felt that they had the right to stop sexual relations at any time. However,

they also felt that the responsibility to control the situation and to 'communicate their needs' to their partner or date lies squarely with the woman. Never during the discussions was men's role and responsibility in the matter questioned.

One may argue that many young females are neither assertive nor self-confident enough to establish limits with their partners or to clearly say 'no'. This lack of confidence may be due to the traditional gender roles and socio-cultural expectations of women in the partner countries, and highlights the importance of satisfying male sexual desires while females' desires are non-existent or less important.

All the project partners reported that the women participating in the focus group discussions contradicted themselves often by revealing traditional beliefs that reinforce patriarchal attitudes toward women and sexuality. For example, on the one hand they stated that no conditions excused date rape and, on the other, they maintained that within each group of women there is an 'easy' one (a woman that easily consents to sexual activity and may have many sexual partners). Although these 'labels' are used for women, they seemed not to apply to men. The sexual behaviour of men seemed to be less or not at all criticized, thus reinforcing the stereotype that sexual aggressiveness is natural, if not admirable, in men.

Further, the focus group discussions showed that a general culture of victim blaming prevails. In discussing gender stereotypes and dating behaviour, although participants believe that a woman can dress in any way she feels comfortable, they reported that sometimes women 'confuse' men with 'provocative' dressing. They stated that it is the responsibility of the woman to prevent unwanted sexual experiences by not engaging in behaviour that may create 'false expectations'. This maintains one of the most powerful myths associated with sexual violence that locates the cause of assault in the victim's behaviour or choices. Even when discussing alcohol and drugs, although the focus group participants emphasised that a man has no right to take sexual advantage of a woman that is intoxicated, they felt that drinking or taking drugs may "cause" sexual assault, again placing responsibility for the occurrence on the behaviour of the woman. The focus on women's behaviour as 'risky', also reinforces the traditional belief that men's sexual desires cannot be controlled and thus one must take appropriate measures to avoid 'provoking' such uncontrollable desire.

Thus, the focus group discussions confirm that gender stereotypes as well as societal expectations with regard to women and men's behaviour (gender roles) can contribute to an atmosphere where date rape is possible and indeed acceptable. The traditional role for women is to be passive in romantic and sexual relationships, whereas men are taught to be sexually aggressive. Under these conditions, men may expect that when a woman says no to sex, she only says it because she's 'expected' to put up some resistance, but that in fact she does want sex (as in 'no means yes'). The focus group discussions conducted during this study also reveal that women have internalized many myths associated with date rape such as those associated with dress and behaviour. Thus, this indicates that victims may not even recognise their experience as rape, but instead blame themselves for engaging in some type of activity or behaviour that may have 'provoked' the occurrence.

A common theme in all the focus group discussions was the need for specialized support services for young women and the promotion of a culture of belief among the police and other relevant

authorities working with victims of violence. An important finding of this study is that resources for young women who have experienced date rape or an unwanted sexual experience are almost non-existent. The research also reveals a lack of confidence in the ability of the relevant authorities to provide support to victims of date rape. Participants of the focus groups maintained that the police would not believe them if they reported an incidence of rape by someone they know. Furthermore, anonymity and confidentiality are an issue particularly in smaller societies such as Cyprus and Malta, but also in Greece, where reputation and 'honour' are still culturally important.

Lastly, focus group participants in all partner countries stressed the urgent need for the introduction of sex education in schools at all levels to address issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality, and violence. The Latvian and Maltese studies both emphasise that date rape can become a risk factor for sexually transmitted diseases, again stressing the need for awareness raising and education in order for young people to make better informed lifestyle choices.

### Case Group

**Case 1 (Cyprus):** *A participant confessed that one night she was wearing a very short shirt that she felt good in. However, that evening a man she did not know touched her buttocks. She believed that the man must believe that she had 'asked for it' because of how she was dressed. She confessed feeling that she was not sure if she was to blame for this and had made a mistake for dressing in a certain way. Even though she wore the same skirt again, she feels confused over this issue.*

**Case 2 (Cyprus):** *A participant stated that she knew a young woman that many in their circle of friends thought was 'easy' and 'slept around' when, in fact, she was a virgin. The young woman began dating someone from this circle of friends and during their first sexual encounter, her partner was so violent that she ended up in the hospital. The participant said that he was violent with her because he did not know she was a virgin.*

**Case 3 (Malta):** *A participant said the trend among young people is sexual intercourse otherwise you are considered a 'loser' and that you are not worth it. "We all have the mentality that everyone is having sex on the first date."*

**Case 4 (Lithuania):** *A participant stated that "young women don't understand how easy aggression can be provoked by appearance, clothes, sexy behaviour, too much attention to the guy, sexy shoes. When a woman acts like this, it is very hard to say that she really does not want to have sex. Men do not believe that women can refuse or do not want to have sex. Guys do not understand even if they are slapped in the face. If the woman says NO- she has to leave. If she says NO later she is misunderstood'.*

**Case 5 (Lithuania):** *During a date a young woman suffered a blow to her head and was raped at a midsummer night party. It took her a long time to recover; she even tried to commit suicide.*



### 4.3 Interviews with Relevant Institutions

Governmental and non-governmental organizations from all partner countries participated in the interviews. As previously mentioned, institutional interviews were grouped into three main themes: profile of organization, prevention of date rape and support for victims, and needs in relation to prevention of date rape and support to victims. This was done for a better understanding of the responses of each representative from each participating institution.

#### Cyprus

Almost all the organizations working on issues of violence in Cyprus employ the Cypriot legal definition as given by the Cyprus law on family violence effectively restricting support and prevention programmes and services to domestic violence and child abuse cases only. This, in conjunction with a lack of gender perspective and sensitivity, creates a tremendous gap in terms of gender violence prevention and support in Cyprus. The family violence framework does not encompass the many forms of violence against women that take place outside the home such as sexual assault. Furthermore, “family violence” fails to highlight that violence against women largely stems from women’s subordinate status in society (WHO, 2005).

There is no gender perspective on violence prevention and many relevant organisations have no specially trained personnel for handling violence cases. Existing services work within the framework of ‘family violence’ and not ‘gender-based violence’ or ‘violence against women’. This reinforces the perception that sexual violence is a private issue and not a public one. Women are primarily seen as family members and not as individuals. Existing services work within the framework of violence in the family and other forms of gender-based violence are largely ignored.

According to the police, date rape cases are difficult to persecute due to victim credibility in the absence of evidence. Another major problem is that, even when there is evidence of rape, cases often do not make it to court as victims often refuse to testify. Although the reasons for this are unknown, it is most likely due to the delay in cases reaching the courts, the psychological trauma of the victim, the lack of confidence in the system, and the absence of adequate social and institutional support for the victim.

Despite these problems, NGOs such as the Family Planning Association and the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family do offer support services to women that have experienced sexual assault and physical violence from their partners or spouses. Both organisations also expressed the desire to expand their services, although lack of sufficient resources and funding are an issue.

It is worth mentioning that the National Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming 2007-2013, although not specifically addressing rape and date rape, does contain a number of measures to address all forms of violence against women including research and awareness-raising. Although this is an important step toward progress, effective implementation of the policies and measures aimed at combating violence against women is still lacking. Furthermore, there are no monitoring or evaluation mechanisms to ensure implementation and impact.

## Greece

All six organizations and institutions interviewed have extensive experience and are active in the field of violence prevention. They are involved in intervention and sensitisation (e.g. conducting awareness raising campaigns, information days, congresses, publications, maintaining interactive websites, producing informational material); in supporting and empowering victims (e.g. educational seminars, psychological and legal support, financial support, group discussions) and in conducting research on related issues such as domestic violence, trafficking, sexual abuse, prostitution). Furthermore, the women's organisations interviewed promote and deal with political issues concerning women and participate in other social and cultural activities. According to their research, the term "date rape" is not widely known and many women do not know that it is a crime. They emphasises that seminars and awareness- raising campaigns should inform women about what "date rape" is, where to go for help and what to do to avoid it during a date. It should be stressed that date rape is a crime that happens often but is rarely reported. Pressure should be put on local and national policy makers to fund new and the existing services for female victims of violence. The adoption of more stringent laws specifically geared toward the prevention of sexual violence was also considered necessary. The importance of networking at the national level and solidarity between women's groups' and other social groups was further pointed out. A strong belief in cooperation among non governmental organisations and state institutions, as well as political activism, was also expressed.

The General Secretariat of Equality has launched a campaign against rape and the Research Centre for Women's Issues has SOS help lines. The new law on family violence that recognizes marital rape as a crime is considered a positive step towards encouraging women to report unwanted sexual experiences.

The Ministries of Health, Justice and Education are considered the appropriate institutions to implement preventive and supporting measures for victims of rape. The Ministry of Health is responsible for educating health professionals to consult with and treat victims in a proper and supportive way. The Ministry of Justice is responsible for amending the Penal code in favour of the victims by providing a clearer definition of rape, and by mentioning date rape alongside marital rape. It should also amend the law to include more severe punishments for perpetrators and institute better support measures for those victims that have taken their cases to trial. The Ministry of Education must promote campaigns in schools and universities concerning unwanted sexual behaviour, women's rights and must also introduce sex education programmes in schools. Local authorities and municipalities are also seen to be responsible for creating structures that provide services for victims of violence (operation of SOS help lines and shelters providing temporary residence, etc.).

According to the institutional interviewees, the following are the main problems with regard to the elimination of violence against women at the national level:

- Absence of official data on the phenomenon of date rape;
- Lack of awareness, as well as the inadequate knowledge of girls and women concerning their rights;
- Lack of resources of organisations and mainly of those that offer active support and work on volunteer basis, since some initiatives from private organisations are mainly funded from E.U. programmes, while State's liabilities are not taken into account;
- Lack of funding for launching state campaigns and seminars for experts because funds for Social Care and its services are constantly eliminated as they are not considered of high importance for



the policy makers;

- Lack of political will to solve the problem and the absence of an integrated and supplemented policy at the local and national level;
- Stereotypes in Greek society preserve patriarchal perceptions and taboos, and still define women's roles, behaviours and position in society. The family unit in particular is seen as a sacred institution where the public cannot intervene. Thus, issues such as domestic violence, marital rape, and sexual exploitation and abuse are viewed as 'private' issues and not crimes against the state;
- Migrant organisations face many difficulties not only due to the racism and prejudices in Greek society, but also because of the closed immigrant communities that prevent women from seeking assistance from relevant organisations or reporting incidents to the authorities in cases of domestic violence or sexual abuse.

All the NGOs interviewed expressed an interest in participating in an informative exchange of experience and good practice on the issue of date rape and sexual violence more generally. It was stated that these issues could be effectively addressed only through joint efforts from both public and private bodies and through the adoption of preventative policies and measures. These efforts should involve awareness raising campaigns, a clear legal framework, and the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality.

### **Latvia**

According to the interviews carried out with relevant institutions, a slow increase in awareness among professionals about violence against women and the existence of a date rape problem can be observed in Latvia. Institutions do not yet realize the significance of this problem, nor do women who have encountered date rape recognise this conduct as punishable. No legislative acts or policy documents specifically differentiate date rape from other forms of sexual violence. The government has neither a common approach nor any policy mechanisms to combat violence against women.

Assistance to victims and educational/public awareness raising activities are mainly provided by NGOs. The ability of the NGOs to help is limited due to the lack of legal protection and financial resources. In recent years, NGOs have organized training for the policemen and other professionals who come in contact with female victims of violence. While working with victims, NGOs have discovered that there are cases where policemen try to persuade women not report violence or rape and that they are unwilling to carry out arrests in such cases. Only NGOs manage crisis hotlines. There are no special shelters for women who are victims of violence. However, in a more positive development, since June 2005 The Ministry of Legal Affairs has been offering legal help free of charge to low income women for civil, administrative and criminal cases (consultations, preparing documents, legal advice and court representation).

### **Lithuania**

Seven institutions and organizations were interviewed in Lithuania. None of them have a specific definition for date rape. Most adhere to the general definition of violence against women as elaborated in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania. Although this issue is not tackled as separate problem in the context of violence against women, most of the institutions and organizations admitted the lack of attention to this issue. The main obstacle is a lack of professional knowledge, data and understanding of the problem for better prevention. Most of the organizations expressed

the need to improve assistance services for women that experience any form of violence. They believe that both social and psychological services should be available.

### **Malta**

The study findings suggest that date rape is alive and well, however, a coordinated approach between the police, Agenzija Appogg (the National Social Welfare Agency for Children and Families) and the relevant NGOs is not yet institutionalized in Malta making it difficult to implement policies and support services holistically. The Malta Police contend they have no activities specifically for the prevention of date rape or for support of the victims. Further, Agenzija Appogg admits that its services focus on generic campaigns and talks. The lack of training for police and social workers at Agenzija Appogg tends to conceal a hidden crime and supports an anti-woman, pro-rape attitude, especially in cases of date rape. Indeed, sexual aggression and date rape have implications for Maltese policy makers and Maltese society; the perpetuation of male dominance in society means less gender equality, less trust and respect between young people, and, as a result, a lack of a safe environment for youth in higher education and places of entertainment.

The Maltese government is strongly encouraged to take heed of the study findings so that preventive and support provisions for date rape victims can be implemented. An appropriate structure with support mechanisms for young people will ease the unnecessary suffering and confusion often experienced by young women whose date has taken advantage of them, and by the same token will improve girls' health and self-confidence when on a date.

Investing in young women's health through institutionalized awareness-raising about the consequences of date rape and establishing support services could make a critical contribution to improving the well-being of adolescents. It is hoped that in Malta, new support structures and health policies can be implemented for the benefit and well-being of all concerned.

## 5. Sexual Violence: Facts and Myths

Rape myths pervade all sectors of society including the police force, the judicial system and the media. Myths about violence against women and especially sexual violence are often confused with reality and thus affect social perceptions and understanding of the phenomenon which in turn hinders effective prevention and support measures. They are affected by different factors such as social, religious, and cultural norms as well as gender-role stereotypes. People with high rape myth acceptance may not identify the seriousness of the legal aspect of rape.

The most tenacious date rape myths are those associated with gender roles and stereotypes that pervade our society and condone sexually aggressive behaviour and a culture of victim blaming. Gender refers to the socially given attributes, roles, activities, responsibilities and needs connected to being men (masculine) and women (feminine) in a given society at a given time. Women and men's gender identity determines how they are perceived and how they are expected to think and act as men and women. It is widely recognised and accepted that all forms of violence against women are inextricably linked to gender inequality and negative gender attitudes. Gender stereotypes are used to justify and to propagate the unequal social and political status of women. Its forms and expressions vary according to different social and historical contexts; motherhood, beauty, submissiveness, and seduction are some of the characteristics that are used to define women's role in society. On the other hand, the socially constructed gender role of masculinity is often associated with characteristics such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, dominance, strength, courage and control. In this context, men's violence is 'naturalized' as an inevitable characteristic of masculinity and gender difference.

Thus, it is important to recognize date rape and sexual violence as forms of gender-based violence that are a result of inequality and gender stereotypes in our society.

### Myths associated with date rape and sexual assault:

*Women say no when they mean yes.*

The myth that women say no when they mean yes still stands and is associated with women's socialisation into believing that it is wrong to want sex. According to this myth, women want to be raped and actually enjoy it. **The truth is that when a woman says no, she means no.**

*Women 'ask for it' by behaving and dressing in 'provocative' ways.*

No-one ever deserves to be raped or sexually assaulted. Drinking, flirting or dressing in a certain way never justifies rape. **A victim should never be blamed for the actions of the perpetrator.**

*Men have sexual needs that cannot be controlled or repressed. Rape is the result of men needing to satisfy their sexual needs.*

The reality is that rape is not about sex but about power and control.

*Rapists are men with severe psychological problems, with a history of problematic behaviour, or they are addicted to alcohol and/or drugs.*

Alcohol and drugs can indirectly influence expressions of violent behaviour, however there is no causal link between alcohol and/or substance abuse and sexual violence. **The voluntary intoxication of an offender cannot be used to justify the crime of rape. Most perpetrators of sexual assault have no history of mental disorder.**

*Someone who was drinking or was drunk when sexually assaulted or raped is at least partially to blame.*

Drinking or being under the influence of drugs does not imply consent to sex, nor does it justify sexual assault. **If the victim is intoxicated, then there can be no capacity to consent.**

*Victims of sexual assault come from particular socio-economic or ethnic backgrounds.*

Myths about the racial, social or cultural background of either the victims or the perpetrators have never been proved. **Perpetrators and victims of sexual assault can be of any race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or economic and social class.**

*Legalisation of prostitution would affect the prevalence of rape and sexual assault.*

This myth perpetuates the mistaken belief that rape is the product of the uncontrollable sexual needs of the perpetrator. **In countries where prostitution is legal the prevalence of rape has not been affected.**

*In the majority of rape cases the perpetrator and the victim are strangers.*

Research has shown that the majority of perpetrators belong to the close working, family, or social environment of the victim. **In two-thirds of rape cases, the perpetrator is known to the victim.**

*Rape only takes place in public and isolated places.*

Contrary to popular belief, rape is not a 'random/occasional crime taking place in the street late at night'. **The majority of rapes occur in the victim's home, or in the home of a friend, relative, or neighbour.**

*Only young, attractive women are at risk of being raped.*

**Women of all ages** are at risk of sexual assault and rape.

*Rape is not a common occurrence, and thus, not important.*

Rape, as well as other forms of violence against women, is severely underreported because of the fear of not being believed, the fear of being blamed, or because women do not recognise the event as rape

or sexual assault. **Rape is one of the most underreported forms of violence against women.**

*Date or acquaintance rape is not as traumatic to the victim as rape by a stranger.*

Date rape can be just as traumatic to the victim as stranger rape and is perhaps more traumatic since it involves a **betrayal of trust, as well as a violation of physical and psychological boundaries.** Research has shown that victims of dating violence are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours, unhealthy dieting behaviours, substance abuse and suicidal ideation/attempts.

*If the victim didn't fight back or there was no weapon used or injuries sustained, rape did not occur.*

Not all cases of rape involve physical injuries or weapons. In fact, only a small number of reported rapes involve clear external injuries. However, in all cases of rape **the perpetrator takes away a woman's right to her body and sexuality through the use of some form of coercion or force.**

#### Sources:

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Kety Pappariga-Kostavara (2007). Rape: The Crime, the Trial, the Law and Social Perceptions. Metechmio

New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault: Advocacy Education Research  
[www.nycagainstrape.org](http://www.nycagainstrape.org)

Rape Crisis Network Europe  
[www.rcne.com](http://www.rcne.com)

Sexual Assault and Relationship Abuse Prevention and Support at Stanford  
[www.stanford.edu/group/svab/myths](http://www.stanford.edu/group/svab/myths)

Stella Papamichail, (2005) Social Representation of the Maltreatment of Women from their Husbands or Partners. Athina- Komotini: Ant. Sakoula.

Tsigkris A., (1998): Without consent: Criminological and Legal Approaches to Rape in Greece. Athina-Komotini: Ant. Sakoula

UNIFEM GENDER FACT SHEET No. 5, Masculinity and Gender-based Violence  
[www.unifem-eseasia.org/resources/factsheets/UNIFEMSheet5.pdf](http://www.unifem-eseasia.org/resources/factsheets/UNIFEMSheet5.pdf)



## 6. Good Practice in the Prevention of Date Rape and Support to Victims

### 6.1 Legal Framework

A number of changes have taken place in the legal framework for rape and sexual assault in European countries during the last two decades. Although these changes are by no means consistent, some commonalities can be found. These include making rape a gender neutral offence or including male rape in the legal definition, removing the rape in marriage exemption, as well as extending the definition to other forms of penetration. Another important change is that, in a number of countries, rape has been moved from the framework of crimes against sexual morality into the framework of crimes against the person (Kelly and Regan, 2001).

The question as to whether definitions of rape should be gender neutral, when research has clearly shown that it is primarily a crime perpetrated by men against women, was resolved by the Sexual Offences Act 2003, passed in the United Kingdom, that defines rape as any form of penetration by a penis of a woman, man or child. The Act also introduces a new gender neutral offence of 'sexual assault by penetration'.

#### *The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (UK)*

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 came into force on the 1 May 2004. It repealed almost all of the existing statute law related to sexual offences. The purpose of the Act was to strengthen and modernise the law on sexual offences, whilst improving preventative measures and the protection of individuals from sexual offenders.

The main provisions of the Act include the following:

- Widening the definition of rape to include oral penetration;
- A statutory definition of consent;
- Specific offences relating to children under 13, 16 and 18;
- The creation of new offences to protect vulnerable persons with a mental disability;
- Under the Act the non-consensual offences are rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing a person to engage in sexual activity. The Act removes the element of consent from many offences, so that only the act itself and age or other constraints need to be proved.

Source: <http://www.campaigntoendrape.co.uk/>

#### *The Youth Justice & Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (UK)*

The Youth Justice & Criminal Evidence Act 1999 restricts the circumstances in which evidence or questions about sexual behaviour outside the circumstances of the alleged offence can be introduced. Where the issue is one of consent, the court will only permit evidence of previous sexual behaviour where the behaviour happened at or about the same time as the alleged rape or was so similar to the behaviour at the time of the alleged offence that it could not be explained as coincidence

Source: <http://www.campaigntoendrape.co.uk/>

#### *Violence against Women Act (USA)*

The original *Violence against Women Act* (VAWA) was enacted in 1994 as Title IV of the *Violent Crime*

*Control and Law Enforcement Act* (P.L. 103-322). When the 109th Congress passed legislation in December 2005 to reauthorize VAWA, it created a new federal funding stream dedicated entirely to the provision of direct services for victims of sexual violence. The new Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) in the Services and Outreach Title of VAWA 2005 will also provide resources for state sexual assault coalitions that assist rape crisis centres.

Source: <http://www.rainn.org/>

### ***The Campus Security Act of 1990, Title II of Public Law (USA)***

This landmark law calls for most public and private colleges and universities across the country to disclose information about crime on and around their campuses. In 1999, the law was amended and renamed “The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act” in honour of a 19-year-old college student, Jeanne Ann Clery, who was raped and murdered in her Lehigh dorm room in 1986. The Clery Act has been amended several more times, most recently in 2000, to require institutions of higher education to make information available to the campus community about the possible presence of registered sex offenders on campus.

Source: <http://www.rainn.org/>

## **6.2 Strategies Implemented by Institutions of Higher Education**

### **Sexual Assault Policies (USA)**

Lafayette College in Pennsylvania (U.S.) publishes and circulates two brochures outlining their sexual assault policies:

*The Sexual Misconduct* brochure provides a blueprint of the school’s response and reporting policy regarding sexual assault and sexual harassment. This covers policy, definitions of sexual assault and sexual harassment including a definition of consent, as well education and prevention programmes, complaint procedures, and relevant resources.

*The Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment Resource Guide for Students* lays out the steps students can take to report a rape, a sexual assault, or sexual harassment, and the types of services the school provides on campus or can refer the student to within the local community.

[www.lafayette.edu/student\\_life/download\\_handbook.html](http://www.lafayette.edu/student_life/download_handbook.html)

Lewis & Clark College *Sexual Conduct Policy* provides a comprehensive framework for the prevention and handling of sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, and sexual misconduct. It includes definitions of terms, prevention information, procedures, and resources available in the event of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or rape. It also recognizes and defines sexual exploitation.

[www.lclark.edu/dept/safety/sexpolicy.html](http://www.lclark.edu/dept/safety/sexpolicy.html)



***Peer Education and Advocacy Programs (USA)***

The University of California, Santa Cruz runs a comprehensive Rape Prevention Centre that aims to educate the community about the realities, the causes and the prevention of rape. The Centre offers a wide variety of free programmes on all aspects of rape as well as gender issues, body image, assertiveness, and self-defense. These include the student-run *Growing up Male and Female*, an interactive workshop that discusses such issues as gender expectations, the media, the definition of rape, myths and facts about rape, and what we can all do to help end rape.

[www2.ucsc.edu/rape-prevention/programs.html](http://www2.ucsc.edu/rape-prevention/programs.html)

Lafayette College, Pennsylvania (U.S.) has a number of student-run peer education programmes supervised by the part-time peer education coordinator: The Coalition on Relationships and Rape Education, Real Men of Lafayette, Questioning Everyone's Sexual Taboos Program, and a peer education drama group that presents *Played Out*, a copyrighted play designed for peer educators.

[www.lafayette.edu](http://www.lafayette.edu)

**6.3 Prevention Programmes*****Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust***

Zero Tolerance, based in Scotland (UK), promotes innovative policy and practice aimed at tackling the root causes of men's violence against women. The organization adopts a primary prevention approach to challenge society's attitudes and structures that tolerate and perpetuate inequality and violence against women and children. It has implemented a number of targeted campaigns toward the prevention of violence against women including the Prevalence Campaign to raise the general public's awareness about the reality and prevalence of child sexual abuse, rape and sexual assault, domestic violence; the Respect Education Initiative aimed at empowering young people and promoting relationships based on equality and respect; the No Excuses campaign aimed at challenging the excuses used by men to avoid taking responsibility for their violence; and the Justice Campaign to raise awareness about the Justice System's failure to deliver equality and justice to women and children.

[www.zerotolerance.org.uk](http://www.zerotolerance.org.uk)

***The Pause Button Campaign***

The Pause Button Campaign is a youth sexual assault prevention poster and toolkit for an audience of 11-13 year-old boys. Its goal is to get boys thinking about the issue of sexual assault and the attitudes that reinforce a culture that accepts sexual assault. The poster and toolkit aim to reinforce boys' positive masculinity, respect boys' own moral compasses, and show boys how to not cross the line and commit a sexual assault.

[www.nycagainstrape.org/pause\\_about.html](http://www.nycagainstrape.org/pause_about.html)

***New York City Alliance against Sexual Assault***

The mission of the New York City Alliance against Sexual Assault is to develop and advance strategies,

policies and responses that prevent sexual violence and limit its destabilizing effects on victims, families and communities. We accomplish this through: 1) research to document the extent of sexual violence in NYC and determine the effectiveness of current intervention and prevention efforts, 2) education about the devastating aftermath of sexual violence and opportunities for its prevention, and 3) advocacy for responsive policy development, practice and legislation with public officials and service providers.

[www.nycagainstrape.org](http://www.nycagainstrape.org)

### ***Skills for Youth! Reducing Your Risk of Date Rape***

ETR - a private non-profit health education promotion organization based in Santa Cruz, California, holds the ReCAPP resource centre for Adolescence Pregnancy Prevention which provides practical tools and information to effectively reduce sexual risk-taking behaviours. Teachers and Health Educators will find up-to-date, evaluated programming materials to help with their work with teens. Various rape prevention programs targeting female, mixed gender and male audiences are reviewed, exploring the programs' impacts on awareness of rape, strategies for preventing date/acquaintance rape, and behaviour change.

[www.etr.org/recapp/research/journal200009.htm#top](http://www.etr.org/recapp/research/journal200009.htm#top)

### ***V-Day Europe to End Violence against Women and Girls***

V-Day events across Europe were organized to address the lack of visibility and public support for women's organisations working to end violence against women. The V-Day initiative advocates a vision of a world without violence against women and girls. This vision is promoted through benefit performances of the play *The Vagina Monologues* as a vehicle to raise awareness and to mobilise new groups to work to end violence against women and mobilise resources. V-Day is a global movement born out of Eve Ensler's award winning play. Through the V-Day Europe project, V-Day partners in four European countries (UK, France, Germany and Luxembourg) and players in other European countries have managed to create a sustainable network to share ideas and experiences to improve the development of the movement in Europe.

[www.vdayeurope.org](http://www.vdayeurope.org)

### ***On-line course for teacher trainees, University of Oulu, Finland***

The core of the project was an on-line course for teacher trainees on the themes, developed and created within the project. The aim was to raise awareness of sexualised and gendered violence with a view to preventing violence in educational environments and to promoting attitude change. The learning material for the course was written and revised through transnational consultations with partners from 10 countries. The publication produced by a previous Daphne project called 'Aware' was used as one of the learning materials. The previous project's web site was revised for the project. The web pages containing the texts and other course material were created and transferred to the Discendum Optima virtual learning environment that served as the communication medium between the students and mentors in the course. The course was organised in two countries, Finland and Germany.

AWARE I: <http://wwwedu oulu fi/aware/aware1.htm> AWARE II: <http://wwwedu oulu fi/aware/englishindex.htm>

***Anti-violence (self-defence) Training for Women and Girls***

This project, implemented by the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University, aimed to map and understand the role of self-defence training in UK and partner countries, specifically as it relates to protection of women and girls against violence. The intention was to better understand how self-defence training can best serve the needs of protecting women, preventing violence against them, and allowing them, after suffering violence, to better reintegrate with confidence.

[www.cwasu.org](http://www.cwasu.org)

***Handbooks for Teens about Dating Violence developed by Liz Claiborne Inc.***

*Tough Talk: What boys need to know about relationship abuse*. This content-rich handbook includes a clear definition of relationship abuse, as well as practical guidelines and suggested questions for men to use when starting a conversation with the boys in their lives about the subject of abuse. Resources for additional information and support are also provided, including Web site addresses and phone numbers for national domestic violence prevention organizations.

[www.loveisnotabuse.com/handbooks.htm](http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/handbooks.htm)

*What You Need to Know About Dating Violence: A Teen's Handbook*. This handbook follows the realistic story of teenagers Angela and Joe, who are involved in a violent dating relationship. The story is interwoven with special sections that help teens identify warning signs of dating violence, discuss options for how and when friends can get involved, provide guidance to those involved in an abusive relationship, and debunk myths surrounding the issue. Also included are quotes from real teens, facts and statistics about dating violence and resources to help teens cope with the issue.

[www.loveisnotabuse.com/handbooks.htm](http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/handbooks.htm)

**6.4 Support and Treatment to Victims of Rape and Sexual Assault*****St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), UK***

This centre was founded in 1986 as a partnership between the police and the local health services and has been used as a template for all SARCs in the UK. St. Mary's is based in a hospital and provides an integrated response to adult victims of rape and sexual assault. Its activities include: immediate crisis support provided by an on-site crisis worker; forensic and medical examinations; one-to-one counselling; screening for sexually transmitted infections and HIV counselling; post-coital contraception and pregnancy testing; 24 hour telephone information and support; case tracking and support through the criminal justice system. The medical services at St. Mary's are provided by an all-female team of forensic doctors and nurses.

[www.stmaryscentre.org](http://www.stmaryscentre.org)

***Peer educators and Hotline of the Youth Group of Latvia's Association for Family Planning and Sexual Health***

Founded 1995 in Riga, the Youth Group focuses mainly on sexual and reproductive health education and aims to:

- Promote self-esteem among individuals and healthy, non-biased attitudes towards sexuality;
- Encourage gender and sexual equality among youth, giving opportunity to build healthy relationships;
- Decrease the amount of unwanted pregnancies among Latvia's youth;
- Decrease the amount of sexually transmitted diseases as well as HIV/AIDS among Latvia's youth;
- Promote responsible decision making among Latvian youth regarding their sexual activity.

The association is in the process of establishing a youth friendly health and education centre in Riga offering a variety of services and medical assistance, such as free consultations with midwives on sexual and reproductive health, information materials, "Hot-Mail" telephone service, and peer education in Russian and Latvian.

### ***Peer Education Project "PEER to PEER"***

As part of the project, young volunteers are educated and trained in a week-long seminar that focuses mainly on the sexual and reproductive health of young people. An examination follows the seminar giving students the opportunity to receive a certificate that enables them to represent the association by lecturing to peers in schools and other welcoming institutions. Every year youth groups reach more than 1000 young people in Latvia in sex education classes; the main topics are sexuality, relationships and safe sex. Every volunteer can improve his/her knowledge and participate in group discussions at meetings about topical questions in the company of various guest speakers (professionals and specialists) every week. Youth group members and their friends are invited to participate in these meetings, even if they have not been certified to give lectures to their peers.

### ***About Date Rape Website***

The "About Date Rape" website provides information and resources about date rape and sexual assault to young women who may have been assaulted. It also provides links to appropriate services and other sources of information, safety tips, and real stories by young women who have experienced rape, as well as educational resources for teachers and other educators.

[www.aboutdaterape.nsw.gov.au](http://www.aboutdaterape.nsw.gov.au)

### ***"Hot-Mail" (sos@papardeszieds.lv )***

This project is a continuation of the "Hot-line" telephone service provided and has been actively implemented since 1999. Its main purpose is to secure youth with fast, up-to-date qualitative information about topical sexual and reproductive health issues. Young volunteers inform the callers about services available to them (coordinates of physicians and clinics) and provide answers to psychological questions. At present, a small youth group team has been specially trained to answer these types of questions. The youth group answers more than 1 500 questions every year, and the most popular topics are contraception, relationships, sexual life and STIs.

The availability of accessible, youth-friendly medical services and remote assistance (i.e. hot-mail) help prevent date rapes cases and raise awareness among young girls and women.

[www.papardeszieds.lv](http://www.papardeszieds.lv)

## 6.5 Other Useful Resources on Rape and Sexual Assault

### ***Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)***

The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) is the largest anti-sexual assault organization in the United States. Its programmes include a National Sexual Assault Hotline offering free confidential services to victims of sexual assault, as well as prevention. Education efforts include working with the entertainment industry, the media, colleges and local communities to help raise awareness about issues related to sexual assault.

[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

### ***Rape Crisis Network Europe***

The Rape Crisis Network Europe is an initiative supported by the Daphne Programme of the European Commission. The aim of the Rape Crisis Network Europe is to support members and survivors of rape through campaigning, education, and research and development work.

[www.rcne.com](http://www.rcne.com)

### ***The Truth about Rape Campaign***

This campaign was founded by a group of women committed to making a difference to how society understands rape. The Campaign aims to challenge myths about rape, and bring the truth and realities of rape back onto the public agenda. Among its activities is a postcard campaign aiming to make clear the truth about rape with the use of *humour* and *shock* to stimulate and challenge people's perceptions and assumptions about rape. Since launching in November 2002, the postcards have found their way around the globe and have inspired other women's groups to campaign against rape. The cards have found their way to Canada, New Zealand and across Europe.

[www.truthaboutrape.co.uk](http://www.truthaboutrape.co.uk)

### ***Take Back the News***

Take Back the News confronts the misrepresentation and under-representation of sexual assault in the mainstream media with the goal of improving both the quantity and quality of media coverage of sexual assault. Take Back the News also seeks to raise public awareness about the epidemic nature of rape, in order to foster greater public dialogue and ultimately greater public responsibility.

[www.takebackthenews.org](http://www.takebackthenews.org)

### ***Stop Violence against Women***

The Stop Violence against Women website (STOPVAW) is a forum for information, advocacy and change. The Advocates for Human Rights developed this website as a tool for the promotion of women's human rights in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the former Soviet Union (FSU), Mongolia, and the U.N. Protectorate of Kosovo. STOPVAW was developed with support from and in consultation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Open Society Institute's Network Women's Program. This site addresses violence against women as one of the most pervasive human rights abuses worldwide. STOPVAW provides women's rights advocates with information and advocacy

tools focused on ending the most endemic forms of violence against women in the region, including domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment and trafficking in persons.

[www.stopvaw.org](http://www.stopvaw.org)

### ***EWL Policy Action Centre on Violence against Women***

The EWL Policy Action Centre on Violence against Women acts as a central coordinating point for information, studies, research, and exchange of models of good practice across the Member States, and above all lobbies for political action to address issues of male violence against women at European level.

[www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org)

### ***Women against Violence in Europe (WAVE)***

WAVE, a network of European women's non-governmental organisations works in the field of combating violence against women and children including women's refuges, counseling centres, SOS hotlines/helplines, organisations and focuses on prevention and training, etc. Currently the Network focuses specifically on violence in the family and in intimate relationships. The Network sets out to promote and strengthen the human rights of women and children in general, and to prevent violence against women and children in particular. WAVE fully supports the aims of the United Nations, and stresses the importance of working towards ending all forms of violence against women and children in public and private life in accordance with the Vienna Declaration, the Declaration on Violence against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and all other related documents.

[www.wave-network.org](http://www.wave-network.org)

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 7.1 Conclusions

This study examined the prevalence and impact of date rape among women across five European countries, their attitudes and dating experiences, and the level of awareness among students and persons in authority. The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches for data collection. Data for the quantitative study came from 1,887 female students between the age of 18 and 24 years from Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta. Furthermore, 10 focus groups with students as well as semi-structured interviews with representatives of 27 relevant institutions in the respective countries provided the data for the qualitative study.

The salient findings in the study were the following: 1) despite the seriousness of the crime, date rape is an unknown concept both among women to whom it matters most and to higher authorities; 2) lack of awareness and gender roles and stereotypes that pervade our society adversely affect women's perception of acceptable behaviour on a date and make women less likely to oppose sexual aggression; 3) the majority of women in the study tend towards 'rationalisation' when they accommodate unwanted sexual advances "willingly"; 4) a distinction between a 'date' and a 'relationship' creates a greater acceptance of sexual aggression on a date; 5) lack of information on sexuality, health, and gender at all levels of education perpetuates violence in young women's relationships; 6) lack of specific training for police and social workers tends to conceal a hidden crime and supports anti-woman, pro-rape attitudes, especially date rape; 7) a co-ordinated approach between the police and relevant stakeholders is not yet institutionalized in the five countries under study making it difficult to implement policies and support services holistically.

The issue of date rape and its consequences for the women in all five societies is shrouded in silence and taboo to the extent that few know of its existence. Date rape and sexual violence is a global phenomenon and is a key theme for public debate and policy reform. More importantly, sexual aggression or date rape has implications for policy makers and our future society: the perpetuation of male dominance in society means less gender equality, less trust and respect between young people, and a less safe place for youth in higher education and places of entertainment. At the other end of the spectrum, date rape can become a risk factor for sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS which the world seeks to eradicate.

Change in policy and public awareness of date rape is not necessarily apocalyptic or catastrophic for individuals, society and the social system. With good will, it means a changing balance between a conscious acceptance that date rape exists, particularly among young people, and the challenge of finding new ways of dealing with victims of date rape, of communicating its consequences within schools, churches, local councils, hospitals and NGOs, and of supporting each other through co-operation with relevant stake holders, particularly the police.

This study seeks to provide an opportunity for realizing new potential. Further research and study is needed to better understand the root causes, the extent, and the implications of sexual aggression and rape in young women's lives. The need to incorporate sexual violence and rape programmes



to combat violence against women is emphasised in order to expose and effectively address what still remains a crime shrouded in silence. The phenomenon of date rape and sexual violence in relationships also implies the need for changes in support systems to cater to the specific needs of young women and incorporate a gender-sensitive perspective and approach. Moreover, the study seeks to encourage more diversity in discourses and debates about gender inequality and violence against women, which also include rape and sexual violence among young people specifically.

While it remains to be seen whether these findings prompt more wide-ranging research that will provide a deeper understanding of young people's attitudes toward sex, relationships, and violence, it is hoped that new support structures will be set up along with new policies on violence against women for the benefit and well-being of all concerned.

## 7.2 Recommendations

### Recommendations to EU Member States

Governments are strongly encouraged to take heed of the study findings in the hope of implementing a comprehensive policy for combating all forms of violence against women. This policy should focus on the needs of the victims and cover all aspects relevant to the prevention of violence and protection of victims. Such policies should include service provision for victims, protective laws, awareness-raising, education and training, systematic data collection and research. There should also be an improvement of co-operation among the different actors and the promotion of networking at the national and international level in order to reach good quality standards.

- Governments should develop a national action plan to prevent and combat *all forms* violence against women and provide the necessary resources for its effective implementation as well as evaluation and monitoring mechanisms.
- The necessary assistance and support should be widely available to victims of sexual violence and rape. Information on the availability of these services should be made widely known so that victims know how and where to access them.
- Governments should ensure the protection of the rights of victims before, during and after legal proceedings to avoid re-victimization and to encourage women to stay the process.
- Health care and social service professionals should be adequately trained to identify and support victims of sexual violence, and should also have the necessary resources to deliver high quality services to victims.
- Support services for victims of sexual violence should incorporate a gender perspective, as well as ensure the safety, security and dignity of the victims.
- National governments should play an active role in challenging negative gender stereotypes as well as discriminatory cultural norms that legitimise and perpetuate violence against women.
- Sexual violence and rape should be defined as a form of violence against women. This definition should be incorporated into all anti-violence programmes and policies.
- Systematic research and data collection on gender-based violence, including sexual violence and rape, should be initiated.
- Awareness raising activities and campaigns should be initiated to provide the public with information with regard to their rights as well as the risks and consequences of rape and sexual violence.



- Funds should be available for NGOs for awareness-rising campaigns and research institutes for additional research on all forms of violence against women.
- Government services should cooperate closely with NGOs as well as the media in preventing and combating violence against women.
- Programmes aimed at protecting women and preventing violence should be established.
- All policies aimed at preventing and combating violence against women should directly engage men in the process.
- Information should be made available, reaching out audiences of both men and women; other ways of informing men about non-violent behaviour should be investigated.

#### ***Recommendations to the National Ministries of Education***

- Educational curricula in public educational establishments should include comprehensive programmes for children and adolescents of all ages informing them about women's rights and challenging gender stereotypes and attitudes that lead to violence against women.
- Negative gender stereotypes should be eliminated from school curriculums at all levels.
- Personnel engaged in all levels of education should be adequately trained to identify possible victims of sexual violence and to refer them to the appropriate specialised services.
- Schools should provide services for young people including a variety of community-based activities and information campaigns, and should promote open discussion on gender roles and sexual abuse (ICPD Programme for Action, 1994).
- Specifically designed programmes and activities to help young people to negotiate sexual situations early in their relationships should be developed, so that healthy and satisfying sexual relations can become a part of healthy and happy lives of both genders.
- Health education, including sexual and reproductive health, should be made a part of the mandatory school curriculum at all levels of education.

#### ***Recommendations to Institutions of the European Union***

- Support the creation of a European human rights convention to prevent and combat violence against women according to the recommendations of the European Women's Lobby, the European Parliament, and the Council of Europe Task Force to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence.
- Implement measures in the European Gender Equality Roadmap and National Action Plans for the eradication of gender based violence.
- Standardize indicators for statistics and data collection on violence against women and disseminate it to all member states.
- Implement Recommendation Rec. (2002) 5 of The Council of Europe Campaign on violence against women.
- Support the activities of the EWL Observatory on Violence against Women and the European Policy Action Centre on Violence against Women.

#### ***Recommendations to the European Women's Lobby (EWL)***

- Continue actions to integrate an explicit legal provision within the European legislation that recognizes violence against women as an obstacle to the achievement of gender equality.
- Increase activities to fight gender-based violence, in particular in the context of the EWL Observatory on Violence against Women, depending on available funding.

- Develop and strengthen the EWL Observatory on violence against women to include this issue in the work programme.
- Continue policy work for a comprehensive European legal instrument for the elimination of violence against women.

### ***Recommendations to women: hints on prevention***

Date rape and sexual assault is always the responsibility of the perpetrator, never the victim. The prevention of date rape is the responsibility of both men and women, and society as a whole.

- Challenge gender stereotypes that contribute to tolerance of sexually aggressive behaviour.
- Be fully aware what date rape is, that it exists and that it can be very dangerous. Date rape and sexual assault is a crime punishable by law.
- Remember that not only strangers are potential rapists but also friends, neighbours or family members.
- Be confident, assertive and alert. Assaultants are less likely to target a person who appears assertive and difficult to intimidate.
- Define and defend your limits in your relationships with others.
- Know your sexual rights; in equal relationships either person has the right to stop sexual activity at any time.
- Avoid drugs or excessive alcohol in a dating situation. It is much harder for you to be in control of the situation if you are intoxicated.
- Always watch your drink and never leave it unattended.

### ***Recommendations to women: hints on action after sexual assault***

Date rape leaves victims traumatized to the extent that they may not even admit having been raped. The victim might actually visit her medical doctor with other complaints. Date rape victims may suffer physically; however, the psychological scars might never fade and might cause irreparable damage to her emotional/family life, social life and career. Although there is no wrong or right thing to do in the event of sexual assault or rape, it may help to do one or more of the following:

- Visit a medical or health practitioner. This will help identify the possibility of contact with a sexually transmitted disease and prevent possible pregnancy. If you decide to report the assault to the police, a medical check-up may be needed to collect forensic evidence.
- Although it is important for victims to do what feels right to them, it is recommended that they file a report with the police.
- Victims should seek the help of a qualified counsellor to help them come to terms with their psychological trauma and to continue leading a normal, healthy life.
- It may be helpful for victims of sexual assault to confide in a person that can support them such as a friend, a trusted adult or a counselor.

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