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INTEGRATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EXPERTISE IN SERBIAN PROBATION SERVICE: A COMPARATIVE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE¹

Summary

The article examines the essential integration of gender-based violence (GBV) expertise into the Serbian probation system. It identifies the urgent need for specialized training for probation officers to address GBV effectively, highlighting the disparities and commonalities with practices across Europe. The paper explores legislative reforms in Serbia aimed at combating GBV and assesses their alignment with European standards. Through a comparative analysis, it suggests models for Serbia to enhance its probation services by incorporating successful European practices. The study underscores the challenges faced in the integration process, including legal, cultural, and institutional barriers. It concludes by recommending strategic approaches for Serbia to overcome these hurdles, emphasizing the role of specialized training, policy reforms, and international collaboration in this area to foster a robust response to GBV within the probation services framework.

Key words: Gender-Based Violence, Serbian Probation Service, European Standards, Specialized Training, Legislative Reforms.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender-Based Violence (hereinafter referred to as GBV), especially domestic and sexual violence, represents a profound and widespread issue globally, manifesting in various forms and impacting individuals, communities, and societies at large. As per the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, GBV refers to any act that results in, or is

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likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (United Nations, 1993). In the context of criminal justice and probation services, addressing GBV is critical for the protection of victims and the prevention of further violence. This paper aims to explore the integration of GBV expertise within Serbian probation service, drawing a comparative analysis with European standards and practices.

The primary objectives of this study are to analyze the current state in this area in Serbia, identify the challenges and barriers to effective GBV management in probation settings, examine European models of GBV integration within probation services for potential application in Serbia and propose recommendations for enhancing GBV expertise in Serbian probation service through legislative, policy, and training improvements.

It is important to say that probation service is a legal measure designed to monitor and rehabilitate offenders who are convicted of a crime but are not sentenced to a term of imprisonment. It serves as a critical component of the criminal justice system, aiming at reducing recidivism and facilitating the reintegration of offenders into society (McNeill, 2006, 56).

So, probation concerns what is known as alternative sentencing, which encompasses various procedures and measures aimed at avoiding the conduct of criminal proceedings, or punishment for committed offenses, or, for the purpose of more successful re-socialization of the convicted instead of imprisonment, stipulating the fulfillment of certain obligations, inclusion in socio-educational and outpatient treatment, or partial confinement (Batričević, 2013, 50).

Probation service play a pivotal role in the criminal justice system's response to GBV in many developed probations systems across the world, not just Europe. Probation officers are uniquely positioned to supervise offenders, provide support and protection to victims, and work towards the prevention of future incidents of GBV. Integrating GBV expertise into probation services involves specialized training for probation officers, the development of risk assessment tools, and the implementation of intervention programs tailored to address the root causes of GBV (Day et al., 2009, 203). Furthermore, probation services can contribute to the broader societal effort to combat GBV through public awareness campaigns and collaboration with other stakeholders, such as law enforcement, social services, and non-governmental organizations dedicated to supporting GBV victims (Heidensohn, 2006).

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in feminist criminology and the social ecological model. Feminist criminology emphasizes the importance of understanding gender dynamics and inequalities in the study of crime and the criminal justice system's response to GBV (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1988, 526-527). The social ecological model, on the other hand, provides a multi-layered perspective on GBV, highlighting the interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors

(Heise, 1998, 262). This model underscores the necessity of a comprehensive approach to GBV, involving interventions at multiple levels of society.

This study sets the stage for a detailed exploration of the integration of GBV expertise in Serbian probation service. By comparing Serbian practices with those of European counterparts, this research aims to identify best practices and offer insights into improving GBV management within probation services. The following sections will delve into the current landscape of GBV in Serbian judicial reality, challenges and barriers to integration, lessons from European models, and strategic recommendations for the future.

2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SERBIAN PROBATION SERVICE: CURRENT LANDSCAPE AND EUROPEAN COMPARISONS

2.1. Current Practices and Challenges in Serbia

The prevalence of GBV in Serbia, akin to global trends, presents a critical challenge to social welfare and justice systems. Despite legislative efforts, such as the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence (2016), which signifies progress, GBV remains a pervasive issue.

In the Republic of Serbia, gender-based violence, manifesting predominantly as domestic and sexual violence against women, remains a formidable challenge. This issue has garnered attention from various international entities, prompting critical assessments and calls for comprehensive legal and societal reforms. The European Commission's 2023 report critically assesses Serbia's efforts against domestic and gender-based violence, spotlighting significant strategic and operational delays. Key issues include stalled strategy implementation against violence, with an overdue action plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Despite the urgent need for enhanced enforcement of domestic violence laws and establishment of an integrated case monitoring system, Serbia lacks official statistics, with estimated femicides reaching 27 in 2022 and 20 in the first half of 2023. Unaddressed GREVIO recommendations call for stronger legal definitions and responses to violence, including rape and forced marriage. The prevalence of support services, primarily overseen by inadequately funded civil society organizations, coupled with the absence of standardized roles for women's civil society organizations in the development of protection plans, highlights significant systemic deficiencies. Additionally, the report highlights the operational challenges of Serbia's safe houses and underscores the necessity for equitable access to these and sexual and reproductive health services. Urgent improvements in strategy, funding, and legal enforcement are deemed essential for safeguarding women's rights and well-being in Serbia (European Commission, 2023, 47-48).

Echoing these concerns, the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) highlighted the pervasive patriarchal norms and stereotypes that contribute to the perpetuation of violence.

It advocated for a more robust and inclusive Serbian response to all manifestations of violence as delineated by the Istanbul Convention, extending beyond mere domestic violence. The paucity of victim support services, predominantly operated by non-governmental organizations with limited financial resources, and the absence of systematic coordination and referral mechanisms were identified as significant obstacles. This inadequacy hampers the optimal utilization of expertise in combatting gender-based violence (Jovanović, 2021, 32).

The Serbian Strategy for Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for the period 2021-2025 (2021) concedes that the extant victim support and assistance framework falls short of international benchmarks. The social, legal, and institutional responses to violence against women and domestic violence in Serbia remain below satisfactory levels. The main challenges include deeply rooted cultural norms and widespread gender stereotypes that normalize and justify violence against women; a significant underreporting of violence due to fear of stigma, shame, lack of support, economic dependence, and distrust in the effectiveness of institutions; legal frameworks not fully aligned with international standards set by the Istanbul Convention, with missing definitions of "violence against women" and "gender-based violence"; inefficient implementation of policies and measures by institutions; inadequate safety and support services for women and their children; lack of sustainable financing for policies and specialized services; and the absence of a unified system for data collection on all forms of violence against women, including femicide. (Republic of Serbia, 2021,16-17)

The discourse surrounding these issues emphasizes the crucial need for bolstering victim support and rectifying the shortcomings of the criminal justice response. Hence, confronting GBV in Serbia necessitates a comprehensive approach that encompasses legal reforms, improved law enforcement, enhanced cooperation among stakeholders, and a cultural shift towards gender equality and the eradication of violence. The outlined challenges mirror entrenched societal norms and structural inadequacies that impede an effective response and support for victims, advocating for a holistic and sustained commitment to safeguarding the rights and welfare of individuals impacted by gender-based violence.

Incorporating a critical examination of Serbia's legislative and practical responses to domestic violence, it is has to discern notable merits in the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence. This legislation is commended for its facilitation of prompt interventions, enabling the swift segregation of victims from potential aggressors. Subsequent to its enactment, a discernible diminishment in the prevalence of domestic violence-related criminal offenses was observed, underscoring the law's efficacy. Despite these advancements, the persistently high incidence of femicide within the context of domestic violence casts a shadow over these achievements, signaling a profound societal and systemic issue that remains unaddressed. Furthermore, the inconsistent application of

measures by relevant authorities indicates a significant gap in the systemic response to domestic violence (Kolarić & Marković, 2022, 217-219).

A critical lacuna in the existing framework is the underutilized role of law enforcement in preempting instances of domestic violence. While the legislation provides a foundation for proactive intervention, the execution thereof is hampered by insufficient coordination and synergy among the police, prosecutorial offices, judiciary, and social services. This disjointed approach undermines the potential for a holistic and effective response to domestic violence, emphasizing the necessity for a more integrated and collaborative strategy. Moreover, the effectiveness of protective and support measures for victims, particularly in scenarios with a heightened risk of recurring violence, warrants urgent enhancement. The current measures, though well-intentioned, fall short of providing the comprehensive support and protection needed by victims, indicating a critical area for legislative and operational refinement (Jovanović, 2021, 39; Kolaric & Marković, 2022, 219).

Notably absent in the discourse on domestic violence in Serbia is the discussion on the role of the probation service. This omission is significant, as the probation service could play a vital role in monitoring offenders, providing support for rehabilitation, and reducing the risk of reoffending. The integration of probation services into the domestic violence response framework could provide a more nuanced and effective approach to managing perpetrators of violence, thereby contributing to the overall safety and well-being of victims.

In Serbia, the legislative framework pertaining to the Law on Execution of Non-Custodial Sanctions and Measures (2014) does not explicitly incorporate the inclusion of probation, referred to as the Commissioner Service, in the expertise and treatment of GBV. The service's primary function in practice is the surveillance of the execution of house arrest sentences, operating without a mandate to engage in the treatment aspects of this sanction necessary for addressing GBV. Also, there is a symbolic imposing of suspended sentences with protective supervision in practice (Tešović, 2020, 80) where potentially could be applied diverse measures from Article 73 of Criminal Code in the case of domestic violence. In addition, the fact that the courts also very often impose sanction of house arrest on perpetrators of domestic violence, in contravention of Article 45 paragraph 5 of Criminal Code, also arises as a serious problem (Bojović-Kolaković, Batrićević, & Matić-Bošković, 2022, 39). This all represents a substantial limitation in the holistic management of domestic violence cases, as the role of probation services is pivotal in overseeing rehabilitation and reducing reoffending risks.

While the Commissioner (Probation) Service in Serbia has significant problems with the lack of probation officers and functions under the centralized decision-making system of the Department for the Enforcement of Non-Custodial Sanctions and Measures, itself a component of the Ministry of Justice's Administration for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions (Bojović-Kolaković, Batrićević, & Matić-Bošković, 2022, 25-26; Tešović, 2020, 18-19), there is a stark contrast between this approach and successful European models. In

many European countries, probation services are empowered and tasked with a comprehensive role that includes GBV expertise. This includes not just surveillance, but also rehabilitative support, risk assessment, and the implementation of specialized programs tailored to the needs of offenders and the protection of victims.

As Serbia's probation service is yet to evolve into a more multifaceted, independent body with direct involvement in GBV interventions, it becomes imperative for Serbian policymakers and practitioners to look towards Europe for successful models of GBV integration in probation services. Learning from these European examples extends beyond GBV - it encompasses a wider scope of probationary functions, emphasizing the importance of treatment, offender rehabilitation, and a more nuanced approach to managing criminal behavior.

2.2. Lessons from Europe: Integration Models and Successes

Domestic Violence (DV) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) intervention programs exist across various European countries, highlighting innovative and effective practices in addressing these pervasive issues within probation services. The lessons drawn from these initiatives emphasize the importance of integrated, evidence-based approaches tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of DV and GBV perpetrators. These programs not only aim to reduce recidivism by fostering behavioral change among offenders but also seek to ensure the safety and well-being of victims and their families. Collaborative efforts among probation services, criminal justice systems, and community organizations are crucial for the successful implementation and sustainability of these interventions.

Perpetrator programs for domestic violence are vital not only because they aim to interrupt violence and break the cycle of intergenerational violence, and respond to the calls of women for intervention in their partners' violent behaviors but also because they emphasize men's accountability within the societal system. These programs are designed to enhance the safety and well-being of women and children by addressing violent behavior through a gender-specific approach, engaging men in the process. They operate as part of a coordinated community response, in collaboration with specialized women's support services to ensure the accountability of male perpetrators to their partners, support services, and the broader society (Pauncz, 2021, 17).

Perpetrator programs typically include intake and assessment, evaluation of risk factors, screening for violence, proactive contact with partners (in collaboration with women's support services), group sessions, and individual counseling. Men may enter these programs voluntarily or as part of probation measures. In Europe, these programs vary widely, encompassing social-educational feminist models, cognitive-behavioral approaches, criminological models, restorative justice (often through probation), psychotherapeutic models, family models, and mental health/dependency models.

The effectiveness of these programs is measured by various factors, including recidivism rates, with data collection methods involving re-arrest records, re-offence rates, and reports from offenders or their partners/ex-partners. However, data on program outcomes is controversial, partly due to challenges in measuring different types of violence, detecting re-offences, and comparing diverse treatment programs. The MIRABEL study in the UK in 2018 is one of the largest-scale studies to date, proposing six measures of success: improved relationship, expanded “space for action”, safety and freedom from violence for women and children, safe and positive shared parenting, enhanced self-awareness, and safer childhoods (Pauncz, 2021, 22).

As it mentioned, the European context provides a diverse landscape of approaches to integrating GBV expertise in probation services. Three European countries will be presented as examples of good practice:

2.2.1. Good Practice in Sweden: A Comprehensive Approach to Domestic Violence Rehabilitation

Sweden's response to domestic violence is characterized by its comprehensive approach, integrating innovative rehabilitation programs across its prison and probation services. The Integrated Domestic Abuse Program (Idap), initially developed in the UK, has been successfully implemented in Sweden since 2006, emphasizing the importance of changing perpetrator behavior through understanding the impact of their actions on victims and adopting non-controlling behavior strategies (Integrated Domestic Abuse Program - Sweden, 2006).

The introduction of Preventing domestic violence program (Predov), developed by the Swedish Prison and Probation Service during 2018-2019, signifies a shift towards more personalized treatment. Delivered in a one-to-one format, Predov's design allows for individual adjustment, focusing on themes such as emotions, thoughts, and communication. This program aims to address core needs areas like emotion mismanagement and antisocial cognition, with a special emphasis on substance abuse throughout the rehabilitation process (Preventing domestic violence program – Sweden, 2019).

The Relational Violence Program (RVP), developed between 2013-2016 and accredited in 2017, represents a significant stride in treating domestic violence offenders. Utilizing cognitive-behavioral therapy and social learning theory, RVP targets individuals with high-risk behavior patterns across various relationships. This individual-focused program is divided into phases that address emotional stability, relationship patterns, attitudes, and substance abuse, aiming to foster behavioral change and risk management (Relational Violence Program - Sweden, 2017).

A critical component of Sweden's domestic violence intervention strategy is the emphasis on victim safety and support. Programs like Idap and RVP include mechanisms for partner contact, ensuring that victims are informed and involved in safety planning. This

approach is complemented by Sweden's social services, which are responsible for victim support, demonstrating a holistic approach to addressing domestic violence.

The effectiveness of Sweden's domestic violence programs is underpinned by rigorous monitoring, training, and evaluation processes. Facilitators undergo comprehensive training, including motivational interviewing and CBT, ensuring that they are equipped to deliver these complex interventions effectively. Furthermore, ongoing evaluations, including pilot programs like Predov, highlight Sweden's commitment to refining and adapting its approach based on empirical evidence.

Sweden's experience with above mentioned programs underscores the importance of tailored interventions that address the unique needs of domestic violence perpetrators. The country's efforts to integrate these programs into its correctional system, along with the focus on victim safety and interdisciplinary collaboration, serve as a model for addressing domestic violence. As Sweden continues to evaluate and adapt its programs, its holistic and nuanced approach provides valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners worldwide seeking to combat domestic violence effectively.

2.2.2. Good Practice in England and Wales: Addressing Domestic Violence through Innovative Programs

England's approach to tackling domestic violence within its criminal justice system showcases a blend of innovative programs, each uniquely designed to address the complex needs of offenders. These initiatives underscore the commitment to reducing domestic violence through rehabilitation, education, and support, drawing on the latest in psychological and educational research.

Developed by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and accredited in 2017, the Becoming New Me Plus (BNM+) program is specifically tailored for men with learning disabilities and challenges, identified as high to very high risk of committing intimate partner violence. BNM+ program combines individual and group sessions to facilitate understanding and change, focusing on recognizing “Old Me” problems and practicing and reinforcing “New Me” behaviors. It employs a cognitive-behavioral therapy approach, grounded in the bio-psycho-social model, to address domestic violence from multiple dimensions, emphasizing the development of skills for non-violence and community integration (Becoming New Me Plus - England and Wales, 2017).

Piloted in 2010 and gaining accreditation in 2013, Building Better Relationships (BBR) program serves heterosexual male offenders who have committed violence or aggression within an intimate partner context. This program, also overseen by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, is based on cognitive and behavioral skills development, aiming to offer participants a suite of tools and strategies to support non-violent behavior. BBR programs strength lies in its comprehensive approach, which includes coordination

with partner link workers to ensure the safety and support of victims (Building Better Relationships – England and Wales, 2013).

Accredited in 2016, Kaizen program represents a strengths-based, future-focused initiative that transcends specific offense types to address the criminogenic needs of each participant. It operates on a bio-psycho-social model, identifying and targeting underlying processes that contribute to offending behavior, including those related to intimate partner violence, sexual offenses, and general violence. Kaizen is structured into three phases – “Getting Going”, “My Journey”, and “New Me” - designed to progressively engage participants in recognizing harmful patterns, developing healthy alternatives, and planning for a future that avoids recidivism (Kaizen - England and Wales, 2016).

Like BNM+, New Me Strengths (NMS) program is designed for men with learning disabilities and challenges but focuses on those at a medium to high risk of intimate partner violence, providing a more accessible entry point for those with moderate needs. Accredited alongside BNM+ in 2017, NMS offers a condensed format that still encompasses key components such as understanding behavioral triggers, developing non-violent conflict resolution skills, and fostering positive community and interpersonal relationships (New Me Strengths - England and Wales, 2017).

As a conclusion, it is important to say that England and Wales's innovative programs for addressing domestic violence among offenders illustrate a commitment to rehabilitation and change, drawing on a deep understanding of the complexities of domestic violence. By focusing on cognitive-behavioral therapy, risk assessment, and individualized treatment plans, these programs aim not only to reduce recidivism but also to foster a broader cultural shift towards non-violence and respect in intimate relationships. The emphasis on training, evaluation, and the potential for digitalization points to a forward-looking approach that seeks to continually adapt and improve interventions, ensuring that they remain effective in the ever-evolving societal context.

2.2.3. Good Practice in Slovenia: Addressing Domestic Violence through Integrated Approaches

The Slovenian approach to combating domestic violence is marked by the establishment of the Probation Administration within the Ministry of Justice in 2018, emphasizing the country's commitment to addressing this pervasive issue. With the passage of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act in 2008, later upgraded in 2017, Slovenia has positioned itself at the forefront of legal reform, acknowledging domestic violence as a distinct category and integrating international standards through the ratification of pivotal Council of Europe conventions (Svetin - Jakopič, 2020, 1).

Central to Slovenia's strategy is the convening of multidisciplinary teams, bringing together a wide array of professionals from social work centers, the police, healthcare, non-profit organizations, and the newly formed Probation Administration. This coordinated

effort ensures a holistic response to domestic violence, emphasizing the creation of individualized assistance plans for victims and families while fostering an environment of seamless information exchange and case management. Such collaboration aims to bridge competencies among various services, enhancing the efficacy of interventions.

At the heart of Slovenia's rehabilitative efforts is the Social Skills Training (SST) program, developed by the Association for non-violent communication. This innovative program, available in nine cities across Slovenia, is tailored for individuals who exhibit violent behavior, offering group and individual sessions focused on non-violent communication, conflict resolution, and gender equality. The SST program is distinguished by its comprehensive approach, which includes a special focus on parenting skills for those who have exhibited violence towards children (Social Skills Training - Slovenia, 2004)

Despite the strides made in combating domestic violence, Slovenia recognizes the need for ongoing critique and improvement. The fragmentation of competencies among services remains a challenge, underscoring the necessity for a more unified and coordinated action. The Probation Administration, alongside other stakeholders, is committed to further developing its staff through education and training, as well as enhancing risk assessment models and specialized programs to address the interconnected issues of alcohol and drug dependence (Svetin - Jakopič, 2020, 2).

Slovenia's journey towards addressing domestic violence is characterized by its legislative advancements, multidisciplinary coordination, and innovative rehabilitation programs. However, the path forward demands a more integrated approach, ensuring that all competent authorities collaborate effectively under a single operational umbrella. With continued dedication to training, program development, and critical evaluation, Slovenia aims to strengthen its response to domestic violence, ensuring safety and support for victims while facilitating meaningful rehabilitation for perpetrators.

3. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATION AND EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

Serbia's legal landscape, with the enactment of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence (2016) and adherence to the Istanbul Convention, signals a committed stance against GBV. However, a notable legislative omission pertains to the direct involvement of probation officers in GBV treatment under the current legal provisions, including the Law of Execution of Non-Custodial Sanctions and Measures. This omission presents a structural challenge in embedding GBV expertise within the probation services, critically affecting the system's capacity to offer comprehensive GBV interventions.

European models present a rich tapestry of strategies integrating GBV expertise within probation services, from which Serbia can draw valuable lessons. Countries like Sweden and England and Wales have developed innovative programs, such as the Integrated Domestic Abuse Program (Idap) and Becoming New Me Plus (BNM+), which provide

comprehensive approaches to addressing domestic violence and integrating victim safety measures. These programs emphasize the importance of specialized training, risk assessment, and tailored intervention strategies, aspects that the Serbian system could benefit from adopting. These programs exemplify the potential of probation services to contribute effectively to GBV prevention and response, provided there is legislative support for their involvement.

Despite the critical role probation services can play in GBV prevention and management, Serbian legislation - specifically the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Law of Execution of Non-Custodial Sanctions and Measures - does not explicitly mandate or facilitate probation officer's involvement in GBV treatment in any stage in which probation officers normally act in developed probation systems - before the criminal procedure, during the process and after its completion. This legislative oversight restricts the capacity of probation services to engage directly in GBV interventions, limiting their role to general supervision and monitoring without a specialized focus on GBV.

This absence of legislative backing for probation officers' involvement in GBV treatment areas stands in contrast to European practices where probation services are integral to GBV response strategies. For instance, in Sweden, probation officers are equipped with specialized training to handle GBV cases effectively, fostering an environment where victim safety and offender accountability are paramount. This discrepancy highlights a critical area for legislative and policy reform in Serbia, advocating for a revision of existing laws to incorporate provisions for probation officers' active participation in GBV treatment and intervention programs.

So, strategies for overcoming challenges in GBV integration should be:

a) *Specialized training programs*

Implementing comprehensive training programs for probation officers and other criminal justice professionals is paramount. These programs should cover the dynamics of GBV, trauma-informed care, legal frameworks, and effective intervention strategies. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) highlights the necessity of continuous education on GBV for legal professionals, underscoring the role of training in improving the justice system's response to GBV (EIGE, 2019).

b) *International collaboration and best practices*

Learning from international best practices can guide the development and refinement of GBV response strategies. Collaborative projects and networks, such as those facilitated by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), offer platforms for sharing knowledge, resources, and strategies for tackling GBV effectively (UN Women, 2018). It is especially of paramount importance for the Serbian Probation Service to join the ranks of its regional counterparts by becoming a member of the Confederation of European Probation (CEP). This organization acts as the authoritative voice for probation matters within the European Union and the Council of Europe, advocating for the needs and challenges faced by probation services at a continental level.

By providing professional insights and comparative data, the CEP is recognized as the definitive "voice of probation from Brussels," making it an essential platform for the Serbian Probation Service to engage with and contribute to the broader European discourse on probation issues and, among others, GBV problems.

c) Policy and legislative support

Developing and implementing supportive policies and legislation that specifically address the needs and roles of probation services in GBV cases is crucial. The Istanbul Convention provides a comprehensive framework for protecting women against all forms of violence and calls for the implementation of fully resourced measures and policies (Council of Europe, 2011). Addressing the legislative gap in probation officer's involvement in GBV treatment in Serbia is imperative for a holistic and effective GBV response strategy.

d) Evaluation and continuous improvement

Establish robust mechanisms for evaluating GBV programs effectiveness, incorporating feedback loops for continuous policy and practice refinement. Effective evaluation of GBV programs requires clear criteria, including measures of program fidelity, participant satisfaction, reduction in GBV incidents, and improvements in survivors' well-being. The World Health Organization (WHO) provides guidelines for evaluating violence prevention programs, emphasizing the importance of both process and outcome evaluations (WHO, 2013). Furthermore, the evaluation of GBV programs should employ mixed-methods approaches that not only assess quantitative outcomes, such as recidivism rates and reporting rates but also qualitative impacts on survivors' well-being and satisfaction with the justice process. Adapting and implementing comprehensive evaluation frameworks similar to those used in European contexts could provide Serbia with deeper insights into program effectiveness and areas for targeted improvements.

4. CONCLUSION

In concluding the examination of GBV expertise within Serbian probation service, it is evident that while Serbia has taken legislative strides, such as the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, there remains a significant gap in the direct involvement of probation services in GBV interventions. This shortfall contrasts with European models where probation roles are more robust in addressing GBV. The omission of explicit provisions for probation officers in the Law of Execution of Non-Custodial Sanctions and Measures underscores an area ripe for legislative reform.

Aligning with European standards necessitates a multifaceted approach: integrating GBV training for probation officers, fostering interagency collaboration, and embracing a comprehensive, rehabilitative ethos for both offenders and survivors. The efficacy of these measures will rely on systematic evaluations and continuous policy evolution. Serbia's path forward, to enhance its probation services in the fight against GBV, should aspire to reflect the depth of understanding and commitment to innovation exemplified by its European

counterparts. Engaging with the Confederation of European Probation would offer Serbia a platform for collaboration and sharing best practices in addressing this pervasive societal issue.

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ИНТЕГРАЦИЈА СТРУЧНОСТИ ЗА РОДНО ЗАСНОВАНО НАСИЉЕ У
ПРОБАЦИОНОЈ СЛУЖБИ У СРБИЈИ: КОМПАРАТИВНА ЕВРОПСКА
ПЕРСПЕКТИВА

Апстракт

Чланак испитује могућност суштинске интеграције стручности за борбу против родно заснованог насиља у оквиру пробационе службе у Србији. Препознаје се хитна потреба за специјализованом обуком пробационих службеника за ефикасно бављење родно заснованим насиљем, истичући разлике и сличности са праксама широм Европе. Рад истражује законодавне реформе у Србији које имају за циљ борбу против родно заснованог насиља и оцењује њихову усклађеност са европским стандардима. Путем компаративне анализе, предлажу се модели за Србију како би се побољшале њене пробационе услуге укључивањем успешних европских пракси. Студија истиче изазове са којима се суочава у процесу интеграције, укључујући правне, културне и институционалне препреке. Закључује се препоруком стратегијских приступа за Србију у циљу превазилажења ових препрека, наглашавајући улогу специјализованих обука, политичких реформи и међународне сарадње у овој области у циљу подстицања снажног одговора на родно засновано насиље у оквиру пробационих услуга.

Кључне речи: родно засновано насиље, пробациона служба у Србији, европски стандарди, специјализована обука, законодавне реформе.

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