



EUROPEAN COMMON APPROACHES TO FIGHT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Summary version

Executive Summary

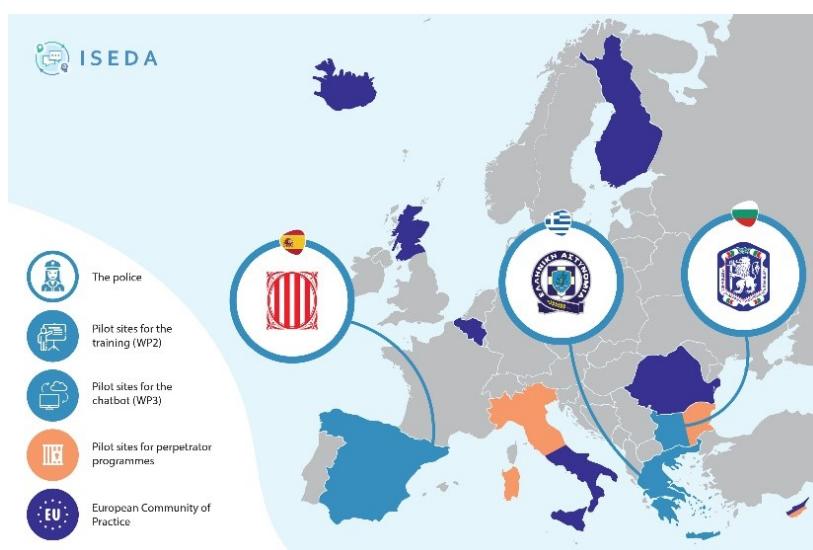
The Innovative Solutions to Eliminate Domestic Abuse (ISEDA) project (2022–2025), funded by Horizon Europe, involved 15 partners from nine European countries.

Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and gender-based violence (GBV) remain pervasive and underreported across Europe, causing severe harm and significant societal costs. Despite progress in legislation and services, systemic gaps persist, including fragmented coordination, limited legal recognition of coercive control and economic abuse, and uneven access to support—especially in rural and underserved areas.

This policy brief presents key findings and strategic recommendations to strengthen prevention, protection, prosecution, and service provision through coordinated European action. It aligns with EU strategies (Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, EU Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence 2024) and supports the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

Key Solutions

- Training Programme and Victim Interview Simulator for Police Officers.** The programme combines expert-driven training materials with an interactive, intuitive interview simulator that helps develop trust, assess DVA scenarios more effectively, and avoid re-victimization.
- Informational Chatbot for Victim-Survivors.** Designed to bridge gaps in access to information and guidance.
- Perpetrator Programmes.** A standardised *IMPACT Outcome Monitoring Toolkit* to support the evaluation of behavioural change and victim-survivor safety through perpetrator interventions.
- Awareness Raising Campaigns.** Implemented to enhance public awareness and early prevention of DVA and gender-based violence (GBV) through multi-country campaigns.
- Education Programmes.** Preventive education on DVA and GBV in cooperation with educational institutions and youth centres.



Policy Recommendations

Prevention

- Include education into primary and secondary school curricula to sensitize young people and educators to the problems related to DVA and GBV.
- Integrate mandatory courses of DVA in higher education and professional training across key sectors to ensure adequate expertise in services.
- Scale up inclusive, sustained awareness campaigns on different forms of DVA and GBV.
- Promote the integration of perpetrator programme interventions into broader justice, health, and social care systems to prevent repeat violence and ensure the safety of victim-survivors.

Protection

- Incorporate trauma-informed, victim-centred, interactive virtual tools into police training to improve the handling of DVA scenarios.
- Strengthen coordination between police, health and social care, and civil society organisations to close systemic gaps and ensure comprehensive information and protection for victim-survivors.

Prosecution

- Provide specialised training for police and legal professionals on the dynamics and diversity of DVA cases to improve judicial outcomes.
- Ensure timely, victim-centred legal proceedings, including fast-track procedures and strong protection measures.
- Criminalise coercive control in countries where it is not yet recognised, and ensure legal recognition of psychological, economic, and digital forms of abuse to close critical legal gaps.

Provision of Services

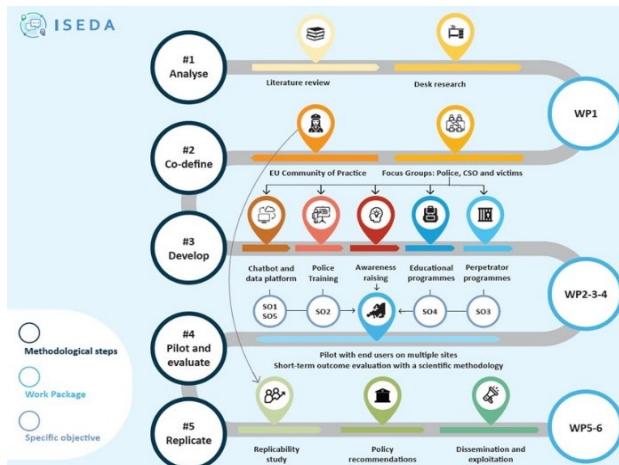
- Implement accessible 24/7 informative digital services such as chatbots, integrated with—but not replacing—human support systems.
- Enhance cooperation between perpetrator programmes and victim support services to ensure more effective violence interventions and risk assessment.

Methods

This policy brief is based on data collected through the ISEDA project, implemented mainly across seven countries: Bulgaria, Catalonia (Spain), Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Italy, and Scotland (UK).

The methodology combined qualitative and applied research approaches, including:

- Scoping studies** of national domestic violence ecosystems, including legal frameworks, services, and gaps.
- Focus group/individual interviews** with women victim-survivors (n = 65), police officers (n = 64), and key stakeholders (n = 79).
- Developing, piloting, and evaluating:** ISEDA chatbot (3 countries), police training (3 countries), perpetrator programmes (3 countries, and engaging new implementers in 6 partner and 6 further countries), awareness raising campaigns (7 countries), education programmes (7 countries).
- Cooperation and consultation** with a European community of practice to assess scalability and transferability (7 countries).



Project Partners

Project Lead

- CGL Cologne Game Lab (Germany)

Academic Partners

- TAU Tampere University (Finland)
- GCU Glasgow Caledonian University (Scotland)
- UA University of Alicante (Spain)
- KEMEA Center for Security Studies (Greece)

Civil Society Organisations

- WWP EN European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence
- SPAVO Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (Cyprus)
- DEMA Demetra Association (Bulgaria)
- CAM Centro di Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti (Italy)
- EAVN European Anti-Violence Network (Greece)

Police Authorities

- Hellenic Police (Greece)
- General Directorate of the Bulgarian Police (Bulgaria)
- Ministry of Home Affairs of Catalonia – Catalan Police (Spain)

Private Companies

- Sopra Steria Group (France)
- Euroquality (France)

For More Information

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Publications

Mielismäki, H., & Husso, M. (2025). Ethical implications of using AI-driven chatbots in domestic violence support. *Social Inclusion*, 13, Article 9998. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9998>

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Mielismäki, H., & Husso, M. (2025). *ISEDA policy brief: European common approaches to fight domestic violence and abuse* [Full report]. Deliverable 5.2; contributing authors: Balabanova, I., Baroncelli, L., Biniari, S., Butterby, K., Cerdán-Torregrosa, A., Gajotto, E., Giacoia, M., Gkontolia, A., Hester, M., Katechaki, D., Kyriacou, F., Lombard, N., Pothoulaki, A., Rossoni, I., Vall, B., Vicente-García, R., Videva, D., Vives-Cases, C., & Xenofontos, E. Horizon Europe ISEDA. <https://trepo.tuni.fi/handle/10024/233149>

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