# Joint report

# on realization of bilateral activity

# “Passing on of experience in research and protecting the interests of victims in Norway”

**Bratislava, October 31, 2017** **Viera Böttcher, Anna Birgitte Mørck**

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## Scope and Goal of Planned Cooperation

The aim of the bilateral cooperation was to gather knowledge on good practice in protection and support of women experiencing violence and their children in Norway and the need to facilitate such comprehensive level of protection in Slovakia; visit specialized centres, get to know procedures and systemic measures introduced in Norway with this goal.

This bilateral project was jointly implemented by the **Institute for Labour and Family Research** (Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny (IVPR) and Norwegian Centre for Study of Violence and Post-traumatic stress disorder – (NKVTS). This was a follow up to a previous cooperation between the partner institutions during the project titled *Coordination and Methodological Centre for Gender Based and Domestic Violence* in 2015-2017.

*Coordination and Methodological Centre for Gender Based and Domestic Violence* as an integral part of the Institute for Labour and Family Research continued in its activities upon completion of the project. At the same time, Act on Victims of Crimes was adopted by the Slovak National Council, just on 12 October 2017 (which was the second day of the study trip of the Slovak experts to Norway). This Act requires all the stakeholders and relevant institutions that come into contact with victims of crimes to approach her/him with adequacy, sensitively, respecting his/her needs. Due implementation of the Act foresees introduction of new approaches and measures. Thus, the CMC welcomed the possibility to visit key agencies in the process of dealing with victims in Norway, collecting knowledge on procedural and material aspects of dealing with victims in Norway, discussing burning issues with the representatives of Norwegian stakeholders.

**NKVTS** is a Norwegian public research institution, while one of its key areas of interest is violence in intimate relations and sexual violence. It carries out its research activities in cooperation with external partners, thus having a wide network of experts in the area. NKVTS has worked closely with various national agencies, namely Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Health, Ministry for Children and Equality and their subsidiaries. Therefore, those joined activities and partnerships have always been a guarantee of professional implementation of a bilateral activity, involving key stakeholders from amongst the police, social services and justice.

Originally, this bilateral activity was scheduled from June to November 2017 but due to administrative and decision-making processes, the time was halved but the partners were committed to reach its full goals and implement it in its original scope. However, due to time constraints it was impossible to organize a round table upon the study trip but discussion was facilitated through bilateral meetings and visit of Norwegian experts to Slovakia was substituted by vivid communication among researchers before, during and after the study trip.

## Selection, Establishing Contacts, Participation of Stakeholders

The protection needs to be a comprehensive, systemic and coordinated response of all relevant stakeholders and agencies from diverse areas. Simultaneously, it also must be reflected in tasks and competencies of each and every organization. Selection of relevant agencies for purposes of this bilateral project reflected the need to provide for comprehensive protection and support at both levels – systemic and individual – in both countries. The following agencies were represented on the Slovak side: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ministry of Justice, Presidium of the Police Force, Academy of the Police Force, IVPR and Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology, National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children in Slovakia. Norwegian partners included representatives of the following institutions: Ministry of Justice, Norwegian Directorate of Health, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, including the representatives of Norwegian police and social child protection services. A full list of participants and presenters is attached to this Report as **Annex 1**.

## Programme of the Study Trip

The study trip was organized from 10 -14 October 2017. The programme and the meetings were scheduled from 11 through 13 October 2017 as indicated in the programme. At the introductory meeting, the delegates were introduced to the representatives of the hosting and partner organization, NKVTS, namely: *Ole Kristian Hjemdal, Anna Birgitte Mørck, Carolina Øverlien, Una Milje*. *The* meeting focused at examining main tasks and mission of the Center, its history, funding mechanisms, goals and objectives. A representative of the Norwegian Directorate of health, *Freja Ulverstad Kärky* informed the delegates about granting mechanisms in the given area, implemented studies and a National Action Plan. Likewise, she presented various activities performed for the benefit of women and children experiencing violence. Norway transfers its 38-years of experience in the area into the current structures, the way how the women shelters are organized and very importantly, close cooperation with the police.

Following presentation was that of *Oľga Pietruchová* (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of Slovak Republic) on the situation in the Slovak Republic and *Barbora Burajová*(CMC), followed by a discussion with the representatives of the Center for Sexual Assaults at the Emergency Health Agency, as an integral part of the Emergency Health System (*Helle Nesvold, Anne Berit Lunde*) that offers services for children and youth and adults, services at paediatric wards specially tailored to work with victims of domestic violence.

The study trip also included the following visits, lectures and discussions:

1. Visit to the police station in Stovner, Oslo – presentation of the **Project November**.
2. Presentation of a national web portal on domestic violence and rape **Dinutvei.no** available in 10 language mutations.
3. Discussion and meeting with the director of police district, coordinator for domestic violence and sexual assaults (*Jannike Haaverstad*), introduction of the concept of so called children houses - **Barnahus**,
4. Visit to the police station in Gronland district at **Emergency Child Care Services**, *Younas Mohammad-Roe*.
5. Visit to Crisis Centre for women and children in Oslo combined with a discussion with its founder, *Inger Lise W. Larsen*.
6. Visit to Barnhaus for the police representatives

The final part of the visit was dedicated to discussing future cooperation and development of bilateral relations between the Slovak and Norwegian experts and transferability of the Norwegian experience to Slovakia.

## Study Trip Results

### Three Analytical Reports (in Slovak language only - http://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk/bilateralna-aktivita#entry:2357

### Blogs for Professionals and Wide Public (in Slovak language only - https://dennikn.sk/autor/zastavme-nasilie/

### Facebook – short reports and photographs from the study trip https://www.facebook.com/kmcrpn/

### 18 Reports from the Study visit to Oslo prepared by all delegates – representatives of individual institutions

All study trips participants submitted their reports, offering their unique perspective on benefits of the study trip and their recommendations what could be introduced to the Slovak system or serve as an inspiration. Hereby we offer a selection of those observations:

#### d.1. Inspiration for Slovakia

* To have a self-standing Act on Crisis Centres,
* Criminalizing domestic violence in legislative framework (self-standing elements of crime), recognizing children as victims of domestic violence (poly-victimisation/re-victimisation of children);
* Mandatory reporting of crime of domestic-violence to the police, while the spectrum of obliged entities is defined widely (i.e. *everybody* with no limitations defined by our legislative framework),
* Criminal aspects – increasing sanctions in elements of crimes that can be defined as domestic violence. Potential tools of control: increased sentences for crimes defined under the merits of *domestic violence* (up to 15 years in the most serious cases and up to 6 years in less severe cases); restrain order for 3 months (in case of a violation a criminal sanction may be imposed); victim monitoring (electronic communication available to the victim allows for immediate reporting in case of an incident, thereby also assistance) and electronic monitoring of a perpetrator (device monitoring the distance from the victim or from a restricted area); change of victim´s identity (however, it has not proved to work well: since the female victims of domestic violence are often not interested in such radical change of life, either themselves but even more importantly, the children);
* Specialized institutions – so called children houses that offer a comprehensive set of services to children that are victims of violence, Sexual Assault Centre (offering services to youth and adults where the staff is trained in collecting evidence for forensic purposes), Emergency Child Care Services (designed for offering professional help to children and families in crisis situations, participating in search for missing persons younger than 18 years and site family inspections (so called home visits) etc.
* Each identified victim is entitled to legal aid of 3 hours, where qualified professionals inform him/her about further procedures (including filing a criminal complaint or initiation of criminal investigation);
* Position of clinical social worker, police lawyer and specialized police officer in interviewing child witnesses;
* Technical and tactic aspects of child interviewing. Interviewing rooms and all services for child victims of violence are under one roof (interviewing, medical exams, psychological interviewing and assistance) with the goal to avoid secondary victimisation and facilitate efficient investigation of cases; training requirements for respective police officers in DCM method (senior police officers with specialized training segmented by the age of victims from the Police Academy), i.e. from 6-16/18 years: one year of training, 4 weeks of the Police Academy plus exam; for children from 2/3-6years and mentally challenged children – one year of training plus 2 weeks at the Police Academy, dealing with practical cases, internships at centres for mentally challenged children plus the exam;
* Coordinating cooperation of stakeholders involved in protection of children against violence, namely early and effective cooperation with the police, coordinating prevention programmes, dealing with cases of violence against children at local and regional level; local prevention action plans, establishing and developing cooperation with the regions in identified cases of violence;
* Official cooperation among different sectors under the Ministry of Justice and Public Security of Norway, including multiple entities – health care, education, social affairs and regional governments and others)
* Focusing on working with perpetrators of violence against children (Project November – Police station Stovner, Oslo),
* Position of coordinator for domestic violence and sexual assaults (coordinator is a police officer); cooperation with existing agencies in child protection, crisis centres, Centres of sexual assaults, cooperation in drafting local and regional action plans and ATV (Alternative to violence – work with perpetrators), improving investigation methods and close contact with investigators;
* Measures for protecting victims of violence (electronic monitoring of a victim, barring order, new victim identity);
* National help line for child victims of violence (as a part of emergency services available to child protection),
* Focusing on work with perpetrators (set forth in National strategy for child protection against violence, updated and approved by the Slovak government on 11 October 2017 as strategic goal).

#### d.2. Findings/recommendations that would increase level of support and protection of victims, including vulnerable victims in Slovakia:

* Specializing police officers, police patrols and other members of the staff that get into contact with the victims of violent crimes – task for Police Academy or Secondary level education.
* Internet portal assisting victims – counselling and help.
* One Centre - creating one coordination centre that would assist in faster and more efficient solution of cases.
* Special interviewing rooms – expanding network of special interviewing rooms outside of police stations. This would, however, require further resources. Until 2021, 14 such rooms are planned to be opened across Slovakia, which is not enough, considering the new Act on victims that will require similar interviewing rooms in cases that inolve vulnerable victims. Ideally, each district and region would have at least one interviewing room like that. The system would, however, also need to involve psychologists.
* Help in interviewing – provide for availability of psychologist and other specialists (social workers, special teachers – other professions but police officers) – while their presence in some types of victims is required by the law (so called emergency service). Currently, psychologists are sometimes not willing to participate in interviewing or they are not available in some regions of Slovakia. This challenge may be also solved through a similar project to the Norwegian *November Project –* where there is a police officer, social worker and child protection specialist at one police station. The number of such police stations would correspond to the number of regional directorates of the police corps and district prosecutor offices.
* Intervention in crisis situations in the field – helping police patrols at time of a crisis situation – be it in family or in other situations (arguments about children), search for missing persons etc. and also assistance to police investigators.
* Client Centre approach in so called *houses* – the victims can benefit for all types of services at one place and at the same time forensic support to criminal investigation is secured. Perpetrator - create a parallel system focusing on work with perpetrators, not only victims.

### Bilateral Meetings and Further Cooperation

* CMC - National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children
* CMC-Presidium of the Police Force

## Conclusion and Brief Evaluation of Bilateral Activity

### NKVTS

NKVTS has appreciated sharing experience and knowledge with our guests from Slovakia. We have learned a lot about the situation when it comes to combating domestic sexual violence in Slovakia and the measures and thinking that is developing there. In particular, NKVTS has enjoyed the academic cooperation on prevalence studies in our two countries. Unfortunately, there will be no joint scientific articles yet, comparing findings, but we hope that we can accomplish that in the future.

We have had an excellent collaboration with the CMC.  Unfortunately, we have experienced the technical/administrative side of this project as an obstacle to a more smooth and productive implementation. The regulations and control systems have not been tailored to a small and not very complex project. NKVTS is reporting on approximately 45 research projects this year, financed from a broad variety of donors. It has been our experience that this project requires more administrative resources than any of the other 45 projects we report on, even if it is by far the smallest project. As a result we have spent an un-proportional time on administration compared to the time spent on implementation and scientific tasks. Due to the time delays in handling the project proposal from CMC and the negotiations on the Partnership Agreement and budget, It was barely enough time prepare and complete the study visit of the Slovak delegation, and no time neither for the Norwegian expert’s visit to Slovakia, nor the planning trip from CMC to Norway before the study visit.

*Anna Birgitte Mørck*

### IVPR, CMC

IVPR appreciates sharing of experience and knowledge in research, along with discussion with the Norwegian experts that are indeed very inspirational. Especially, we do appreciate accentuated interest in further research projects and academic discussion. In a way, it is an appreciation of our expertise, skills and knowledge. Also, it is a way how to expand research activities beyond the Slovak borders.

Considering the current situation of support and protection offered to persons experiencing violence in intimate relations, domestic and sexual violence and adoption of the Act from 12 October 2017 on victims of crimes as amended that expects to create a system of support to victims of crimes the CMC appreciates that the representatives of key stakeholders from Slovakia had an opportunity to meet their counterparts in Norway. Visiting specialized centres, along with the presentations of the Norwegian representatives offered an overview on a comprehensive system of support available for persons experiencing violence in intimate relations, domestic and sexualized violence and also created room for a discussion that led to identification of key measures that need to be introduced.

The bilateral activity was pivotal for future relations and cooperation of CMC with the key stakeholders that has been confirmed and transformed into specific steps and tasks stipulated at follow up bilateral meetings.

*Viera Böttcher*

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[*www.norwaygrants.org*](http://www.norwaygrants.org)





**Annex 1.:**

# List of presenters in Oslo

1. **Health Directorate:**

Freja Ulvestad Kärki (Project manager/clinical psychologist)

1. **Ministry of Justice and Public Security:**

Line Nærsnes (Director)

Hilde Knotten (Senior Advisor)

1. **«Project November», Oslo Police**

Hanne Finanger (Project Manager)

1. **Sexual assault centre, Oslo Emergency Room**

Helle Nesvold (Senior Consultant/Head Doctor

Anne Berit Lunde (Manager)

1. **NKVTS:**

Carolina Øverlien (Senior Researcher) and Gertrud Hafstad (Senior Researcher)

Ole Kristian Hjemdal (Senior Researcher)

Solveig Bergman (Head of Section and Senior Researcher)

Anna Mørck (Senior Advisor)

Arnfinn Andersen (Head of Research)

Inger Elise Birkeland (Director)

Helene Langsether (Editorial staff)

Norunn Vorland (Researcher)

1. **Oslo Police:**

Jannike Holm Håverstad (Family Violence Coordinator)

1. **Children Protection Emergency Service**

Younas Mohammad-Roe (Leader)

1. **Childrens House:**

Aud Åmodt (Senior Advisor)

1. **Oslo Crisis Centre:**

Inger Lise W. Larsen (Leader)