



WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE EUROPE

WAVE Network & European Info Centre Against Violence

Bacherplatz 10 | 4 • 1050 Vienna, Austria

phone: +43-(0)1-5482720 • fax: +43-(0)1-5482720-27

e-mail: office@wave-network.org • www.wave-network.org

ZVR: 187612774

PRESS RELEASE

17 October 2011: XIII WAVE Conference.

Strengthening European efforts to address violence against women & children.

This year's XIII annual WAVE conference was held from October 11-13th in Rome's town hall and included in-depth workshops at the Casa Internazionale delle donne. Around 400 experts from 38 countries and various backgrounds gathered to strengthen the efforts to prevent violence against women and children. Lawyers, practitioners, psychologists, researchers and representatives of Italian and European institutions shared their experience on the work of women's service centres around the world. The European Network WAVE (www.wave-network.org), which was the core engine of the initiative, and the Italian Network D.i.Re (www.direcontrolaviolenza.it) which hosted the conference, shed light on the still widely underserved issue of violence against women.

Building on the recent movements in the Arab world, WAVE looked to connect women of Europe and the Arabic world to listen to and learn from the Arab women of the Mediterranean region, where women's NGOs significantly contributed to the present and past civil rights movement and continuously provide services to women survivors of violence under complex political contexts and contradictory legal frameworks.

Data collected by the WAVE focal points shows that at present, structures of women's shelters need substantial strengthening and constant financial support by national institutions and local authorities. The WAVE country report 2010 that provides information from 44 European countries highlights a serious lack of women's shelters. According to Council of Europe recommendations, every country should guarantee one shelter place for every 10,000 inhabitants. In reality there are only 27,000 shelter places (beds) in Europe and an urgent need to create further 54,000 to comply with the CoE standards. The conference hosting country Italy is also not a good practice model. Only 500 shelter places are provided when in fact there is a need for a total of 5,700. This lack of shelter places can have dramatic consequences on women who suffer from violence. For some of them a rejection from a women's shelter, due to a lack of places, can end up deadly.

Several issues were on the agenda of the XIII WAVE conference which concluded with the following recommendations and points to ponder:

- Putting more focus on migrant women victims of violence and simultaneously avoiding culturalism;
- Enhancing the methods of risk assessment for prevention and intervention of violence against women in order to prevent further violence and femicide;
- Acknowledging the need for a well balanced and real assessment of the risk of violence by former partners, particularly with regards to joint custody regulations, to avoid that women and their children are dangerously exposed to violence through non-reflected court decisions;
- Increasing the pressure on governments to signing and ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11th May 2011 in Istanbul, a convention that is open to all countries;
- Making a concrete EU commitment to deliver a strategy on combating violence against women and including the special needs of women survivors of violence into current measures for protecting victims of crime and violence in criminal and civil matters.

Press enquiries: Felice Drott | +43/1/544 08 20 38 | felice.drott@wave-network.org