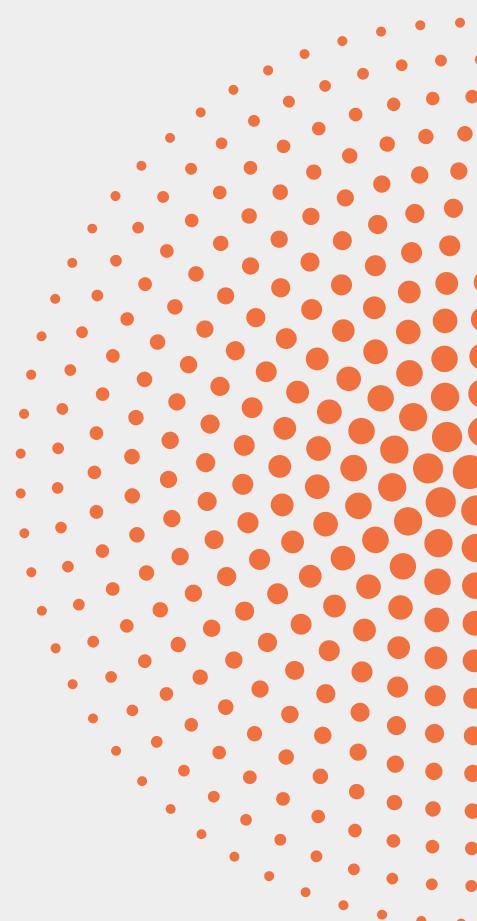


# NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

2025 | 2027



Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri  
Dipartimento per le pari opportunità



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# Foreword

The “**National Strategic Plan on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2025-2027**”, simply referred to as the “Plan”, is a multi-year strategic framework outlining the objectives – and related interventions – pursued by the Italian Government to ensure an effective and consistent nationwide response to the phenomenon of male violence against women.

The Plan has been adopted by the Minister for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities, pursuant to Article 5, paragraph 1, of the Decree-Law of 14 August 2013 (which has been amended and converted by Law No. 119 of 15 October 2013). The current wording of Article 5, as a result of the amendments introduced by the 2022 Budget Law (Law No. 234 of 30 December 2021), provides that the President of the Council of Ministers or the political Authority responsible for equal opportunities shall develop and adopt a National Strategic Plan for combating violence against women and domestic violence at least every three years, with the contribution of the relevant administrations, the women's organisations engaged in the fight against violence, the anti-violence centres, and after obtaining the opinion of the Unified Conference. The Plan must be designed in synergy with the objectives of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted in Istanbul on 11 May 2011, and ratified pursuant to Law No. 77 of 27 June 2013 (the “Istanbul Convention”).

The Plan aims to support and further integrate the government policies and measures, while enhancing the role of the social associations and partners in defining and planning the relevant policies, with the engagement of the above-mentioned entities and organisations.

The institutions referred to in the Plan are tasked with advancing the actions for preventing and combating violence against women, and protecting and supporting the victims of violence, in continuity with the policy framework of the 2021-2023 Plan, which abides by the guidelines of the Istanbul Convention. Given the scope and ongoing relevance of the challenges addressed by the 2021-2023 Plan, its validity has been formally extended until the adoption of the subsequent Plan.

Therefore, the 2025-2027 Plan has been updated and adapted to facilitate planning over the next three years, with a view to stepping up this strong commitment towards combating male violence against women and domestic violence and speeding up its implementation by featuring more operationally effective elements

than in the past, drawing on the lessons learned.

This can be achieved by stressing how important it is to nurture and strengthen a virtuous circle, through policies that can help prevent violence against women and support women victims of violence, aspiring to create the “Europe free from violence against women and domestic violence”, envisioned in the Istanbul Convention.

The focus therefore remains on effectively ensuring respect of fundamental rights (by spreading awareness about personal rights and identifying ways to protect them), preventing and combating violence against women (by helping achieve active change in society), and identifying and combating the underlying conditions of social exclusion (lack of personal and financial independence, inability to acknowledge and move out of situations of abuse and violence), as further harmful effects of the cycle of violence.

The time horizon of the Plan, conceived as a continuum with the previous plan and serving as a bridge between the previous and the next planning period, is tied to the timetable of the UN 2030 Agenda, in particular to Goal 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, a common goal which all the institutions, entities and organisations involved can join forces to achieve.

At national level, the Plan is an integral part of a unified action strategy aiming to entrench solid safeguards for women and girls, which ties in with the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2026, in conjunction with the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) and the new European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for the 2021-2027 period.

Given the speed with which trends in violence against women evolve over time, and the possible need for adjustments to the guidelines of the Plan, its actual duration has been designed to cover the 2025-2027 three-year period (in accordance with article 5 of Decree Law 93/2013), although it is also established that the Plan shall remain in force until the adoption of the subsequent one and, where deemed necessary, may be updated or revised during the reference period.

The Plan is based on several key principles that were already at the core of the 2021-2023 Plan, namely:

- *working towards equal opportunities between men and women, as a fundamental principle for the development of any society;*
- *the right of every woman and girl to live free from violence in both the public and private spheres;*
- *gender mainstreaming, for effectively including the gender perspective in all spheres of economic, social and political life;*

- *women's empowerment, a key element for preventing violence and enabling the victims of violence to effectively escape from abuse;*
- *inclusion, to take into account the multiple vulnerabilities and forms of discrimination suffered by the victims of violence.*

In addition to these principles, a number of cross-cutting guidelines have steered the development of the Plan, and will direct its implementation, to ensure continuity with the past and provide a degree of flexibility. The Plan aims to:

- build on the experience gained from the previous *National Strategic Plan on Male Violence against Women 2021-2023*, which, as mentioned, has been extended until the approval of the 2025-2027 Plan, taking the strengths and positives from the previous plan and mitigating any critical issues found, while building on the progress achieved so far, based on the information collected from the actions carried out;
- adapt its strategic outreach, based on changes and updates to the legal framework, to ensure consistency with reference framework in which it operates and adopt the most up-to-date documentary sources;
- address the challenges posed by the context data, which has highlighted that only a thorough understanding of the phenomenon and its various forms can lead to the development of targeted and effective policies;
- promote an active approach that values women as individuals capable of engaging and working with and offering solutions for the issues affecting them, fostering targeted and effective responses to their needs;
- strengthen the governance of interventions and systematically organise the actions carried out in accordance with the Plan, also by defining and sharing good practices so that they can develop into common and structured practices.

The above principles and guidelines stress how important it is to continue the previous work, as a solid foundation for improvements concerning all the Pillars of the Plan.

Therefore, the Plan also maintains the four Pillars that formed the backbone of the 2021-2023 Plan – namely: Prevention, Protection and Support, Prosecute and Punish, Assistance and Promotion – and related priorities.

The 2025-2027 Plan introduces an innovative operational approach. Drawing on lessons from the previous Plan and addressing past challenges, it is designed to serve as a self-implementing tool, capable of responding to the needs arising from the phenomenon of male violence against women, which requires swift action, flexibility, and strong cooperation among all actors involved.

To this end, the Plan provides, on the one hand, for the activation of monitoring and evaluation activities in parallel with its implementation, and, on the other hand, includes an operational annex listing the actions that, based on the preparatory work, are considered ready for implementation or capable of rapid activation. For each of these actions, the responsible administrations involved in their implementation are also identified. These measures are aligned with the proposals emerging from the ad hoc meetings of the Observatory on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence at the Department for Equal Opportunities (abbreviated, in Italian, as DPO), regarding the implementation and strengthening of the actions underway, whether completed or yet to be started, and the development of new actions to respond to the most recent needs.

Finally, the actions set out in the Plan aim to achieve various cross-cutting objectives:

- speeding up the direct release of new resources and opportunities within the local communities, to cut time and bureaucracy;
- bringing together the economic and financial resources from multiple EU, national and regional programmes;
- ensuring timely monitoring and constant evaluation of the interventions and their impact;
- improving the transparency and accountability of the Plan. The implementation process will feature widespread structured consultation, for consolidating and expanding governance, which will remain centred on the aforementioned Observatory on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence., on the basis of shared policies for combating male violence against women and, where necessary, for redefining the tools applied in the forthcoming years.

The Plan will be implemented using the resources granted under the applicable legislation.

## PART I

# Reference framework



Part one of the Plan contains a description and analysis of the reference framework, examining the regulatory context, the institutional actors involved, and the scale and characteristics of the phenomenon of violence against women, based on statistical surveys and the research conducted under the 2021-2023 Plan. This part of the Plan is rather extensive, reflecting the considerable investments and commitments made by the political and institutional actors, and the broad range of public and private partnerships, under the guidance of the Istanbul Convention, providing a wealth of information that can be exploited for the future implementation of the Plan.

The Plan is framed within a complex and articulated regulatory framework. Compared to the 2021–2023 Plan, this framework has evolved at the international level with the adoption of Directive (EU) No. 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the European Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, which will be discussed further on, and at the national level with the adoption of Law No. 168 of 24 November 2023, confirming the overall commitment of all governmental and non-governmental parties to provide a systemic response to the phenomenon of violence against women.

## 1. The international framework

Internationally, the Istanbul Convention continues to serve as a key cultural and political reference point and inspiration for the Plan. Article 1 of the Convention, in fact, states that its purposes are to:

- *protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence;*
- *contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women;*
- *design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures for the protection of and assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence;*
- *promote international co-operation with a view to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence;*

- *provide support and assistance to organisations and law enforcement agencies to effectively co-operate in order to adopt an integrated approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence.*

Also worthy of note is the UN Resolution of 25 September 2015 for the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which sets out consistent international targets within the framework of Goal 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.”

**Box 1. List of targets UN Resolution**

- a. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- b. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- c. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- d. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- e. Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- f. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.
- g. Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
- h. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
- i. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

Another important step was taken in June 2019, with the approval by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) of *Convention No. 190 concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work*.

This establishes that regulatory measures should recognise that “*violence and harassment in the world of work can constitute a human rights violation or abuse, and that violence and harassment is a threat to equal opportunities, is unacceptable and*

*incompatible with decent work” and acknowledge “that gender-based violence and harassment disproportionately affects women and girls, [...] an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach, which tackles underlying causes and risk factors, including gender stereotypes, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and unequal gender-based power relations, is essential to ending violence and harassment in the world of work”.* The legislation prompted by the Convention relates, in particular, to protection and prevention, monitoring of implementation, and redress and compensation mechanisms, and, finally, guidance, training and awareness-raising. Law No. 4 of 15 January 2021 ratified and implemented International Labour Organisation Convention No. 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace, adopted in Geneva on 21 June 2019 during the 108th session of the General Conference of the said Organisation.

A very significant innovation has been introduced to this framework, which should also be taken into account for implementing the Plan, namely, the said Directive (EU) No. 2024/1385, which must be transposed into national law by 14 June 2027. The Directive, which is the result of particularly complex negotiations, reflecting the considerable diversity of the national legal frameworks in this area, is the first instrument adopted by the European Union to establish a common legal framework for preventing and combating violence against women.

Article 1 of the Directive “lays down rules to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. It establishes minimum rules concerning:

- the definition of criminal offences and penalties in the areas of sexual exploitation of women and children and computer crime;
- the rights of victims of all forms of violence against women or domestic violence before, during and for an appropriate time after criminal proceedings;
- protection and support for victims, prevention and early intervention”.

In a nutshell, the Directive introduces new provisions defining offences and penalties, the protection of victims and legal remedies, support to victims, data collection, prevention, coordination and cooperation between Member States.

The Directive is also related to the European Union's international commitments to combat and prevent violence against women and domestic violence, and aims to create a specific reference standard for this problem. Article 2 contains a definition of violence against women, which is defined as “*all acts of gender-based violence directed against a woman or a girl because she is a woman or a girl (...) that result in or are likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering.*”

It then goes on to define domestic violence as “*all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the [...] domestic unit, irrespective of biological or*

*legal family ties [...] whether or not the offender shares or has shared a residence with the victim”.*

Member States are required to encourage reporting any violent acts that third parties are or become aware of, or suspect, to the competent authorities, offering protection to minors who are victims of or report any violent acts.

In terms of training and education, the Directive also encourages targeted awareness-raising programmes for children; disseminating information on preventive measures, on the rights of victims and on legal remedies; combating harmful gender stereotypes; and promoting gender equality, mutual respect and the right to personal integrity.

## **2. The national framework**

### **2.1 Regulatory framework**

Italy is widely recognized for its advanced legislative framework to prevent and address violence against women and domestic violence. Following the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, Italy has implemented significant reforms, resulting in a robust and comprehensive legal system that stands out among European and international partners. The reform process was further consolidated in the period of the 2021-2023 Plan, when important regulatory measures were introduced.

The most recent of these is Law No. 168 of 24 November 2023 containing “Provisions for combating violence against women and domestic violence”, promoted by the Minister for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities, Eugenia Roccella, the Minister of Justice, Carlo Nordio, and the Minister of the Interior, Matteo Piantedosi.

This law is the result of intense inter-departmental collaboration and also incorporates the recommendations of the Observatory Assembly and the Committee on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence set up within the DPO.

Its aim is to improve protection for victims by turning the spotlight on so-called “red-flag crimes” and tightening preventive measures. In the field of criminal justice, the law sets strict timelines for the adoption of interim relief measures, such as the strict application of electronic tagging measures, and provides for arresting perpetrators even in so-called “*deferred flagrante delicto*” circumstances, i.e. shortly after the act, while pending the acquisition of videos or images or electronic documents.

The law also encourages specialised training for judges dealing with this type of offence, and provides for mandatory circular information flows, so as to be able to

immediately adopt appropriate measures to protect the victims, if the restraining measures applied to the perpetrators of violent acts are terminated or become ineffective, or only partially effective, for any reason, also establishing that probation measures may be granted only if the convicted person agrees to take part in, and successfully completes, specific rehabilitation programmes. Finally, the victims (or their successors, in case of death, if eligible on a means tested basis) are granted provisional compensation, in advance of a conviction.

#### BOX 2 – Law No. 168 of 24 November 2023

- **Article 1:** Strengthening of warning and information measures. The scope of application of the official warning by a police authority is expanded to include offences such as criminal coercion, by force or threat, threats and the dissemination of explicit content without consent. Furthermore, law enforcement agencies and health institutions shall provide information to the victims of violence about the anti-violence centres and, if requested, shall put the victim in contact with the said centres. Penalties are increased for those who, having already received a warning, repeat acts of violence.
- **Article 2:** Strengthening of preventive measures. This article amends the anti-mafia code to extend preventive measures (such as special forms of surveillance) to individuals suspected of serious crimes of domestic or gender-based violence, including homicide and sexual violence. It introduces electronic tagging for tighter controls in cases of recidivism and provides for quarterly monitoring of the use of these tools by the Ministry of the Interior.
- **Articles 3-6:** Priorities and judicial training. Articles 3 and 4 guarantee absolute priority, in judicial and organisational terms, in the handling of domestic and gender-based violence cases, while Articles 5 and 6 promote specialised training of judges and compulsory training for public officials, law enforcement agencies and judicial police officers, also providing for the adoption of national guidelines for the adequate and uniform training of front-line professionals working with women victims of violence in various roles.
- **Articles 7-11:** Interim measures and timeliness. These articles introduce a series of measures to speed up the handling of cases of violence. Article 7 imposes a 30-day deadline for assessing the need for interim measures in cases of domestic violence, while Article 8 requires a quarterly review of the proceedings. The following articles provide for increased penalties for violating protection orders and authorise arrests in “*defered flagrante delicto*” circumstances (within 48 hours), in order to collect evidence,





allowing law enforcement and judicial officers to intervene as quickly as possible. The power of immediate removal from the family home in cases of danger is also expanded.

- **Articles 12-13:** Strengthening of interim measures. The use of electronic tagging is made mandatory in cases of violation of restraining orders, while Article 13 extends the possibility of applying pre-trial detention or house arrest even for offences that provide for electronic tagging, to increase control of potential repeat offenders.
- **Articles 14-16:** Victim support measures. Article 14 introduces the obligation to inform the victim of violence and their lawyer of the release or escape of the accused perpetrator, while Article 15 makes suspended sentencing conditional on the perpetrator taking part in an ad hoc rehabilitation programme. Article 16 extends compensation to victims for violent crimes, facilitating access for those who have been the victims of serious crimes committed within the household.
- **Articles 17-18:** Financial assistance and standards for rehabilitation institutions. Article 17 introduces the significant possibility of obtaining a provisional sum for victims of serious crimes or for family members of victims of homicide committed by their partner. Finally, Article 18 provides that the Minister of Justice and the political authority responsible for equal opportunities shall establish the criteria and procedures for accrediting the bodies authorised to provide rehabilitation programmes for convicted perpetrators and the guidelines for conducting their activities.

Law No. 168 of 2023 is undoubtedly an important step in the significant reform process, after the approval of Law No. 69 of 19 July 2019, containing “Amendments to the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and other provisions on the protection of victims of domestic and gender-based violence” (known as the “Red Code Law”).

Another important step forward, after the approval of the 2021-2023 Plan, was the approval of Law No. 234 of 30 December 2021 (2022 Budget Law), which, by amending Article 5 of Decree-Law 93/2013, with the aim of ensuring uniform nationwide action, has introduced the mandatory adoption of a National Strategic Plan on violence against women and domestic violence, at least once every three years.

This far-reaching regulatory process also includes the reform of criminal procedure (Law No. 134 of 2021), which has extended the protections afforded to the victims of domestic and gender-based violence, and Legislative Decree No. 149/2022, implementing the civil procedure reform law (the so-called “Cartabia Reform”), which added special provisions to the Code of Civil Procedure (Book II, Title IV-bis, Chapter III, Section I), such that, in cases where domestic abuse or domestic or gender-based

violence are associated with separation, divorce, child custody or termination of cohabitation proceedings, an application may be lodged directly with the court (which may then shorten the ordinary time limits by up to half and arrange for a preliminary investigation).

Another regulatory measure of great importance is Law No. 53 of 5 May 2022, containing provisions relating to statistics on gender-based violence, which has established an inter-departmental information system capable of ensuring adequate information flows on violence against women, to assist in the development of effective policies, while granting the political authority charged with equal opportunities the power to provide guidance on statistical requirements in this area.

Other important developments occurred during the period of the 2021-2023 Plan, in terms of secondary legislation and so-called “soft law” instruments, of significant importance in this area.

In particular, the Agreement adopted by the Unified Conference on 14 September 2022 allowed to redefine the minimum requirements for government-accredited and funded anti-violence centres and shelters. A key innovation was the introduction of strict criteria regarding the qualification of service providers, with a greater emphasis on “networking” by the anti-violence centres (abbreviated in Italian as CAVs), within a specific region-wide response system, emphasising the importance of continuous training for front-line staff serving as primary public contacts with the victims of violence, to improve the ability to handle and treat cases and provide effective support. The preventive role of the anti-violence centres was also acknowledged, through their awareness-raising activities for both the general public and specific groups, such as students. Regarding shelters (abbreviated, in Italian, as CRs) the Agreement has introduced a broader and more detailed definition of “residential accommodation,” based on both the level of risk to which the woman is exposed and the stage in the process of moving out of violence (emergency stage, stage one, stage two), establishing a maximum of 180 days of hospitality in the case of “stage one” and “stage two” shelters, in accordance with the idea of offering temporary protection while on the pathway towards achieving financial and housing independence. It also emphasises the need for systematic collaboration between the entities involved in supporting women on the pathway out of violence, with a focus on protecting women regardless of where they’re staying and on addressing the social, housing and financial needs of women and their children.

Furthermore, the Agreement adopted on 14 September 2022 has defined the minimum requirements for counselling centres for male perpetrators (or potential perpetrators) of violence against women (abbreviated, in Italian, as CUAVs).

According to the Agreement, CUAVs are responsible for developing and providing programmes, in prisons and in the community, to ensure that the perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence and abuse may acknowledge their responsibility for their aggressive and violent behaviour, to prevent them from re-offending, and therefore promote relationships based on non-violence, equality and mutual respect.

A non-regulatory but nonetheless highly significant initiative is the White Paper on Training in relation to male violence against women. The paper, edited by the Technical and Scientific Committee of the Observatory on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, promoted by the Minister for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities, was presented on 22 November 2024, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The Paper consists of two parts and aims to respond to the widely recognised need to strengthen measures to prevent violence and encourage the acknowledgement and emergent awareness of abuse, especially with regard to front-line professionals dealing with violence against women. The first part of the Paper defines the phenomenon, analyzing its specific features by area, form, and intensity; it offers training guidance, providing a coherent framework for this important topic since the Istanbul Convention. The second part outlines concrete training steps and recommendations for implementation, thereby giving full prominence and a coherent framework to a topic of great importance since the Istanbul Convention. The dissemination of the White Paper and related activities will be discussed further on in the Plan.

Finally, there should be mention of the “Final Report of the Working Group on Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities”, edited by the National Observatory on the Condition of Persons with Disabilities, which addresses various aspects of violence against women with disabilities, a particularly worrying phenomenon because it concerns women who face double discrimination, exposing them to further and even more specific forms of abuse. The Plan has included parts of the Report, focusing primarily on communication, and the relevant services and measures, expanding on and specifying the actions already included in the 2021-2023 Plan.

## **2.2 The financial framework**

Numerous administrations, including local authorities, contribute with their own resources to the planning and implementation of measures to prevent and combat violence against women. Within this complex framework, a central role is assigned to the “Fund for Policies on Rights and Equal Opportunities”, established under Article 19, paragraph 3, of Decree-Law No. 223 of 4 July 2006, amended and converted into Law No. 248 of 4 August 2006.

The Plan is implemented mainly through the resources allocated under the mentioned Fund

in accordance with the current regulatory framework, based on Articles 5 and 5-bis of Decree-Law No. 93/2013, which, at central government level, is also used to “enhance the support and assistance to women victims of violence and their children, through uniform methods for strengthening the network of local services, violence centres, and assistance services for women victims of violence” (Article 5, paragraph 2, letter d) of Decree-Law No. 93/2013).

To this end, since 2017, more than €160 million has been allocated to the regions, on an annual basis, by the political authority responsible for equal opportunities.

Over time, the annual resources allocated to the regions have increased significantly, from just over €12 million in 2017 to €80 million in 2024, with substantial spikes in 2023 (from €40 million to €55 million) and in 2024 (from €55 million to €80 million).

This upward trend also applies to other measures. One of the most significant increases was undoubtedly provided by Law No. 213 of 30 December 2023 (2024 Budget Law), to top up the so-called “Freedom of Income”, a financial-support measure for women victims of violence, allocating €10 million per year in 2024, 2025 and 2026, and then €6 million from 2027 onwards<sup>[1]</sup>. The law also provides €4 million per year, in 2024, 2025 and 2026, for setting up counselling and rehabilitation centres for male perpetrators of violence against women; €5 million per year, in 2024, 2025 and 2026, for CAVs; €3 million per year, in 2024, 2025 and 2026, for measures to prevent violence against women and domestic violence through training programmes for professionals serving as primary public contacts; €20 million per year, from 2024 to 2026, for buying and building CRs. The same law also financed social security exemptions for hiring women and men who are victims of violence. To this end, €1.5 million was allocated for 2024, €4 million for 2025, €3.8 million for 2026, €2.5 million for 2027 and €0.7 million for 2028, for private-sector employers who hire unemployed women who are victims of violence and are beneficiaries of the Freedom of Income (including women who benefited from the measure in 2023), in the three-year period from 2025 to 2027.

The 2025 budget law has further increased the Freedom of Income (+1 million when fully operational) and allocated €3 million for guidance and job training programmes for women victims of violence (Law No. 207 of 30 December 2024).

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[1] The 2025 Budget Law has raised the allocation for 2025 and 2026 from €10 million to €11 million.

## 2.3 The work of the Italian Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on Femicide as well as on all forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

It is widely acknowledged that policies aimed at preventing and combating violence against women, in order to be effective, require the systemic mobilisation of all the actors, regardless of their point of view, towards the achievement of a common goal. Parliament has a very important role to play in boosting and guiding this fight, especially through the ad hoc Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on Femicide as well as on all forms of Gender-Based Violence established in 2017, which is playing an increasingly key role, and has become a bicameral commission, in the present Parliament, established by primary legislation (Law No. 12 of 9 February 2023, published in the Official Journal No. 41 of 17 February 2023).

The work carried out by the former Commission focused on reorganising the existing framework, highlighting the critical issues and limitations affecting the measures put into place and identifying possible pathways and tools for improvement, beginning with a legal and administrative plan for strengthening the overall system of prevention of violence and protection and support for women, as well as the prosecution of perpetrators.

### Box 3. Tasks assigned to the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Femicide and all forms of Gender-Based Violence - Art. 2 of Law No. 12 of 9 February 2023

- a. to investigate the actual extent, conditions, nature and causes of femicide, understood as the killing of a woman on the basis of gender and, more generally, all forms of male violence against women;
- b. to monitor the effective implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, done at Istanbul on 11 May 2011, ratified and transposed into Law No. 77 of 27 June 2013, No. 77, and any other supranational and international agreement on the subject, as well as national legislation inspired by the same principles, with particular regard to Decree Law No. 93 of 14 August 2013, amended and converted into Law No. 119 of 15 October 2013, as well as Law No. 69 of 19 July 2019;
- c. to establish any inconsistencies and shortcomings in the current legislation, regarding the protection of victims of violence and any minors involved, and also to verify the possibility of a criminal law review of the specific case of sexual harassment, with particular regard to harassment in the workplace;
- d. to determine the level of training, awareness and capacity for intervention of the central and peripheral authorities and public administrations responsible for prevention and assistance activities;





- e. to verify, as recommended by the World Health Organisation, the effective implementation by the institutions of projects in all types of schools, aimed at educating students about mutual respect in relations between men and women and the recognition and respect of all forms of diversity;
- f. to analyse incidents of femicide that have occurred since 2016, to establish whether there are any recurring conditions or behaviours that can be statistically taken into account, with a view to guiding prevention efforts;
- g. to monitor the effective implementation by the Regions of the Plan and the national guidelines for healthcare and hospitals, on the matter of rescuing and providing social and health care to victims of violence and their relatives up to the third degree exposed to domestic violence;
- h. to monitor the effective allocation to the centres that deal with male violence against women of the resources allocated to them by the aforementioned Decree-Law No. 93 of 2013, amended and converted into Law No. 119 of 2013, and by the stability laws and budget laws starting with the 2011 stability law;
- i. to monitor the activities carried out by the local anti-violence centres, and to ensure that the centres liaise with the competent authorities in developing policies to combat male violence against women, drawing on the experience they have built up in over thirty years of work, as well as to monitor and enhance the activities carried out by counselling and rehabilitation centres for abusive men;
- l. to propose regulatory and financial measures, including reviews of the Special Action Plan, to ensure that the entire network of anti-violence centres and shelters across the country, and the provision of pathways out of violence and for reintegration into the workplace, are financed in a secure, stable and consistent manner over time, in order to avert the risk of closing down, and allow the implementation of structured programmes to help women escape the spiral of physical and mental violence;
- m. to propose legislative and administrative solutions to prevent and combat, in the best possible way, femicide and, more generally, all forms of male violence against women, as well as to protect victims of violence and any minors involved;
- n. to take steps to draft consolidated texts on the subject, summarising the regulatory frameworks in the various sectors, for the purpose of improving the consistency and completeness of the regulations.

The present Commission, on 31 July 2024, after a long series of hearings, approved the “Report on the review of the regulatory framework for preventing and combating gender-based violence, for the purpose of producing a consolidated text (pursuant to Article 2, paragraph 1, letter n) of Law No. 12 of 9 February 2023)”, basically developing a proposal for the rationalisation and reorganisation of the entire sector.

The final comprehensive report is the result of a long and thorough fact-finding process conducted by the Bicameral Commission on Femicide, based on 32 hearings with experts, addressing gender-based and domestic violence.

The approach chosen by the Commission is deliberately comprehensive, to understand the root causes of violence and examine the various areas in which women are involved, in order to develop effective proposals for action.

The report highlighted that, despite an advanced national regulatory framework, there are still several issues that require an increased focus, such as prevention, female empowerment as a lever to combat economic violence, which is often at the root of other forms of violence, orphans of femicide, free legal aid for victims of violence – which is currently limited to certain types of crime, excluding, for example, attempted femicide – harassment in the workplace and foreign women.

In summary, the Report containing the Commission's proposal for a Consolidated Text on Gender-Based Violence is a very significant step forward in acknowledging and fighting violence against women, while highlighting the legislative and social challenges that still remain, also in light of the requirements of the future transposition of the said EU Directive 2024/1385.

### 3. The scale of the phenomenon

The link between statistical data on violence against women and policies for preventing and combating the phenomenon is enshrined in the 2011 Istanbul Convention, and in the many recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). These principles were reiterated in the 2015-2017 Special Action Plan against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, and in the 2017-2020 and 2021-2023 National Strategic Plans on Male Violence against Women, achieving very important results, in particular thanks to the contribution of Istat (Italian National Institute of Statistics)<sup>[2]</sup>, which has a long story of measuring the phenomenon of violence against women, and the analysis and evaluation activities carried out by CNR-IRPPS<sup>[3]</sup>.

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[2] Following the signing of the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding with the DPO at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and the subsequent 2017 agreement, Istat was tasked with creating a fully integrated information system on violence against women (operational since November 2017 and continuously updated <https://www.istat.it/it/violenza-sulle-donne>), aimed at making available information and quality indicators that provide an overview of the phenomenon, integrating data from different sources (Istat, Department for Equal Opportunities, Government Departments, Regions, National Research Council, anti-violence centres, shelters and other services such as 1522, etc.).

[3] CNR-IRPPS analyses and evaluates interventions to prevent and combat violence against women, within the framework of two collaboration agreements with the DPO of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers signed in 2017 and 2022. In particular, the widespread research activities can be traced back to two main objectives, (1) analysing the characteristics and operating practices of specialised and general services in the field of preventing and combating GBV, and (2) evaluating the policies and interventions provided for in the National Anti-Violence Plans.

Law No. 53 of 5 May 2022 containing “Provisions on statistics on gender-based violence”, is a further step forward in strengthening the information system on violence, to ensure an adequate flow of information on violence, in terms of its frequency and data content, with a view to designing appropriate prevention and counter-measures and ensuring effective monitoring of the phenomenon. Italy is one of the few countries to have introduced a specific law on gender-based violence and the statistical framework required to monitor the phenomenon and create *ad hoc* violence combating and awareness raising policies. The law specifically requires Istat to conduct surveys on gender-based violence and its characteristics, including the perpetrator-victim relationship, the type of violence reported, the presence of children and the types of assistance provided. Istat began collecting data on the system of protection for women victims of violence in 2017. In 2018, surveys were conducted on the performance and provision of services offered by anti-violence centres (CAVs) and shelters (CR). In 2020, the statistical surveys covered the users of CAVs and the dissemination of data relating to the free nationwide emergency 1522 helpline service for women victims of violence and stalking. These surveys are carried out working with the DPO and the Regions.

### **3.1 Prevalence, characteristics and consequences<sup>[4]</sup>**

In 2014<sup>[5]</sup>, it was estimated that one third of women (6,788,000, 31.5%) in the 16-70 age group had experienced some form of physical or sexual violence during their lifetime: 20.2% (4,353,000) physical violence, 21% (4,520,000) sexual violence, 5.4% (1,157,000) the most serious forms of sexual violence such as rape (652,000) and attempted rape (746,000).

Whereas considering only violence by partners or ex-partners, 13.6% of women had suffered physical and sexual violence (2 million 800 thousand), in particular 5.2% (855 thousand) by their current partner and 18.9% (2 million 44 thousand) by their ex-partner. It was found that most women who reported a violent ex-partner had ended the relationship precisely because of the violence endured (68.6%).

Psychological and economic violence by partners is also widespread (26.4% of women in a relationship have suffered psychological or economic violence from their current partner and 46.1% from a former partner), as well as stalking (21.5% of women between the ages of 16 and 70, 2 million 151 thousand women, have suffered stalking by an ex-partner during their lifetime; while, in the case of women who have suffered stalking on multiple occasions, the figure is 15.3%).

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[4] The surveys were conducted with the financial contribution of the DPO, thanks to the active collaboration of anti-violence centres, and with the support of some women victims of violence.

[5] Istat, Multipurpose survey on women's safety, 2014, <https://www.istat.it/it/violenza-sulle-donne/il-fenomeno/violenza-dentro-e-fuori-la-famiglia>.

It should be noted that the most serious forms of violence are perpetrated by partners, such as rape and attempts at suffocation or burning, up to and including homicide, which acts are committed by partners or ex-partners in about 60% of all cases (61.3% in 2019).

Other forms of abuse and violence include sexual harassment and sexual blackmail in the workplace, which affected 8.9% of female workers, and other types of sexual harassment suffered by 43.6% of women during their lifetime<sup>[6]</sup>.

The trend towards the emergent awareness and acknowledgement of violence is clear from the recognition of abuse as a crime (from 14.3% in 2006 to 29.6% in 2014 for partner violence) – and not just a wrongful act or even a normal occurrence in a relationship – and from the capacity to seek help from anti-violence centres and helplines (from 2.4% to 4.9%) and to report abuse (from 6.7% to 11.8% in cases of violence perpetrated by a partner)<sup>[7]</sup>.

Moreover, some situations are going from bad to worse due to the spread of technology, which is why there is a growing focus on the new forms of violence, most of which can be included in the broader category of cyberviolence.

A second area of particular interest, from a prospective point of view, is economic violence, a means of relational control that should be considered as a form of violence in itself.

The report prepared by the Criminal Analysis Service of the Ministry of the Interior, in March 2025, focuses specifically on violence against women, providing data for 2024 and comparing it with 2023. It specifically highlights:

- a 4% increase in stalking offences or harassment, which numbered 20,289 instances compared to 19,538 in the same period in 2023;
- an 11% increase in abuse against family members and cohabiting partners, from 25,260 cases recorded in 2023 to 27,962 incidents in 2024;
- an upward trend in sexual violence, which increased by 6%, from 6,230 cases in 2023 to 6,587 in the same period in 2024.

As for intentional homicides, the number decreased by 6%, from 341 in 2023 to 321 in 2024. The same trend is observed for homicides with female victims (the report does not

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[6] Istat, Indagine multiscopo sulla sicurezza dei cittadini, anno 2015-2016, <https://www.istat.it/it/violenza-sulle-donne/il-fenomeno/violenza-sul-luogo-di-lavoro>.

[7] Istat, Indagine multiscopo sulla sicurezza delle donne, anno 2014.

explicitly refer to femicides, a concept that is still foreign to our legal system)<sup>[8]</sup>, cases of which have dropped, with 120 victims in 2023 and 113 in 2024.

Female victims accounted for 35% of all homicides committed in both 2023 and 2024, compared to 40% in 2022. In the family and relationship sphere, the lowest figure for homicides was recorded in 2023 (-9%), with a slight increase in 2024 (+3%).

Regarding homicides committed by partners or ex-partners, the number of incidents and of female victims show a similar trend until 2023. In 2024, however, a divergent trend was recorded: while the total number of homicides committed by partners or ex-partners increased slightly (from 70 in 2023 to 71 in 2024), there was a drop in the number of female victims (64 in 2023, compared to 61 in 2024, representing a reduction of approximately 5%).

### **3.2 Stereotypes about gender roles and sexual violence, the intergenerational transmission of violence, risk factors**

The Istanbul Convention has turned the spotlight on the causes of violence rooted in the specific culture of countries (Articles 12 and 14) and the importance of collecting statistical data to better understand both the prevalence and causes of the phenomenon, as well as the State's response to the perpetrators (Article 11). Measuring the prevalence of gender role stereotypes, on the one hand, and attitudes towards violent behaviour, on the other, becomes key to understanding the cultural environment that legitimises the system of inequality in which violent relationships originate and are justified.

In this regard, Istat conducted a first survey on gender role stereotypes and sexual violence in 2018. The second edition is currently underway, although only the provisional data has been released<sup>[9]</sup>.

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[8] Regarding the lack of a definition of femicide, it is worth mentioning that the Council of Ministers, on the proposal of the Ministers for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities, Justice, the Interior, and Institutional Reforms and Regulatory Simplification, approved bill AS 1433, providing for the “Introduction of the crime of femicide and other regulatory measures to combat violence against women and protect victims”. It is considered a milestone bill because it introduces the crime of femicide as a specific self-standing offence in the Italian Criminal Code. The bill provides that “Anyone who causes the death of a woman, when the act is committed as an act of discrimination or hatred towards the victim as a woman or to repress the exercise of her rights or freedoms or, in any case, the expression of her personality, shall be punished with life imprisonment”. At the time of writing, the bill is still being examined by Parliament.

[9] Istat, Gender stereotypes and the social image of violence: initial results. Provisional data for May-July 2023.

The initial results and analysis show some positive findings, such as the decreasing trend of stereotypes and, above all, a greater awareness of violence, although there is still a long way to go to overcome prejudice, especially among younger people. The 2023 data also show low tolerance for physical violence in couples (2.3% of people believe it is always or in some circumstances acceptable for “a boy to slap his girlfriend because she flirted with another man”, and 4.3% believe that “slapping, in a couple, is occasionally acceptable).

A percentage of 10.2% of respondents, especially young people (16.1%), admitted to accepting that a man should control his wife/partner's communications (mobile phone and social media), and it was also found that 53.6% of the population aged between 18 and 74 hold at least one stereotype about gender roles. The figure is higher among men, although it is decreasing, compared to the first survey, especially among women.

However, stereotypes about sexual violence are also widespread, with 48.7% of the population adhering to at least one stereotype on this issue. 39.3% of men agreed either strongly or broadly that it should be alright for a woman not to engage in sexual intercourse if she does not want to, while almost 20% of men think that violence is triggered by the way women dress, compared to 29.7% and 14.6% of women respectively.

However, on certain issues there are no differences of opinion between males and females. In fact, about 11% believe that a woman who is sexually assaulted while drunk or under the influence of drugs is at least partly responsible, and about 10% think that if a woman accepts a man's invitation after a party and is subsequently raped, she is in some way to blame for what happened. The intergenerational transmission of violence is directed by the cultural context and educational conditioning<sup>[10]</sup>. Although the latest surveys on women's safety date back to about ten years ago (a new survey is currently underway, with the first results expected in September 2025), the discussions and reflections on the causes of violence against women, sparked by the surveys conducted in 2006<sup>[11]</sup> and 2014, are still relevant today. Children who witness or suffer domestic violence, by the father towards the mother, tend to repeat the violence as adults<sup>[12]</sup>. In these cases, rates of violence by partners increase fourfold, while girls who witness or suffer it tend to tolerate it three times more than others.

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[10] In 2013-2014, the Istat Time Use Survey devoted a section to opinions on the role of women.

[11] Istat, Multipurpose survey on women's safety, 2006.

[12] Istat, Multipurpose survey on women's safety, 2014.

The level of violence that characterises the history of abuse of women is associated with the violent context of the family of origin. Violence by the current partner, which affects 5.2%<sup>[13]</sup> of women, rises to 35.9% if the men suffered physical abuse in childhood, and to 22% if they witnessed the father's violence towards the mother. Likewise, compared to an average of 31.5%, the frequency of sexual or physical violence suffered by adult women reaches (i) 58.5% if they suffered sexual abuse before the age of 16, (ii) 64.2% if they suffered physical abuse from their father as children, and (iii) 64.8% if they suffered physical abuse from their mother.

Violence against women is most prevalent in the web, and especially in social media, with the figures partly growing as a result of the pandemic. This new form of online violence shares the same root causes and many of the factors underlying offline violence, reflecting systematic and structural gender inequality, cultural causes and harmful social patterns.

A 2022 note by the United Nations Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) drew attention to the need to bridge the information gap on new forms of gender-based violence generated by the growing use of digital technologies (defined as “technology-facilitated gender-based violence” or TFGBV) which, according to the mentioned global study, affect 38% of women directly and 85% indirectly (i.e. when witnessing digital violence aimed at other women)<sup>[14]</sup>.

In this regard, Istat in agreement with the Department for Equal Opportunities, has prepared an in-depth study on gender-based violence by analysing the sentiment and emotions in social media content<sup>[15]</sup>, observing how social media users react to violence against women and/or how discussions are created around it. The adopted method helps understand which messages trigger collective discussion, providing a map of the topics (such as body-shaming, femicide and rape) that most strongly elicit (positive and negative) sentiments and emotions.

Between 1 April 2020 and 11 January 2024, the Istat platform set up for this type of experimental statistical analysis captured 4,383,137 social media posts on gender-based violence (approximately 80% of which on Twitter, now X).

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[13] See previous note.

[14] UN Women, Accelerating Efforts To Tackle Online And Technology Facilitated Violence Against Women And Girls (VAWG), 2022, available at [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Accelerating-efforts-to-tackle-online-and-technology-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls-en\\_0.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Accelerating-efforts-to-tackle-online-and-technology-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls-en_0.pdf).

[15] Istat, First Report on the analysis of violence against women conveyed by social media platforms (July 2024). For further information, visit <https://www.istat.it/statistiche-per-temi/focus/violenza-sulle-donne/il-fenomeno/stereotipi/>

The analysis revealed that, in a subset of content relating to one year of observation (1 November 2021 – 30 November 2022), public outrage and awareness emerge mainly in relation to events that attract the most reactions on social media (such as, for example, 25 November, or in the case of brutal femicides, such as the case that triggered the peak recorded in June 2023), or other events related to women speaking out in the public sphere (e.g. appearances on television programmes), which are commented on with violent online content. The data therefore highlights that the more well-known female figures speak out on the issue of violence against women, the more they are subject to hate attacks.

Thanks to the topic analysis reported in the experimental study, we can observe how social media reinforces and amplifies victimisation and the nature of the discussion clusters around certain issues such as body shaming and gender stereotypes.

### **3.3 Pathways for supporting women victims of violence**

Various governmental and non-governmental pathways are available to support women seeking to escape victimisation and the cycle of violence against them. An examination of these pathways, which inevitably consist of different stages and are highly subjective, in relation to the individual characteristics of each woman, her history of violence and the opportunities available to her to seek help and move out of violence, is an integral and fundamental part of the overall process of describing and understanding how the phenomenon develops, the response and intervention of institutions and private social services, and the behaviour of women and the help-seeking dynamics over time.

Moving out of violence does not take place in a specific moment in time. It is a process, a pathway that can be long or short, and which each woman chooses independently or with the encouragement of support networks (anti-violence centres and shelters, 1522 helpline operators, law enforcement agencies, social and health workers). In either case, the process may also take place in emergency circumstances (danger to the life/safety of the woman and/or her children).

#### **3.3.1 Admissions to the National Health Service (Accident and Emergency Departments)**

In the three-year period between 2017 and 2019, 16,140 women had at least one Accident and Emergency (A&E) department visit with a diagnosis indicating violence, while the total number of visits to A&E departments with a diagnosis of violence, over the same three-year period, amounted to 19,166.

In the three-year period between 2017 and 2019, 16,140 women had at least one Accident and Emergency (A&E) department visit with a diagnosis indicating violence, while the total number of visits to A&E departments with a diagnosis of violence, over the same three-year period, amounted to 19,166. In 2023<sup>[1]</sup>, the number of visits by women to A&E departments for violent incidents amounted to 16,947, compared to 14,448 visits in 2022 (+17.3%). The increase in the number of visits by women to A&E departments for violent incidents was higher than the increase in total visits, albeit lower than the pre-pandemic levels. Visits by women reporting violent incidents before the COVID-19 pandemic ranged from 14,368 in 2017 to 15,800 in 2019. They dropped to 11,826 in 2020 and rose again to 12,780 in 2021. In 2023, 5.6 A&E admissions of women for violent incidents were reported per 10,000 residents. Young women aged 18-34 were the most affected (10.7 per 10,000), followed by adult women aged 35-49 (9.1 per 10,000).

In 2023, there were 1,370 hospital admissions under ordinary conditions for women reporting violence, up compared to the 1,196 admissions recorded in 2022 (+14.5%). The figures, however, are lower than before the COVID-19 pandemic (1,487 in 2019). The increase in hospital admissions for women for violent incidents, compared to 2022, was nevertheless higher than the increase in total ordinary admissions (+3.3%), which were also lower than pre-pandemic figures. The proportion of ordinary admissions for violent incidents per 10,000 total ordinary admissions in 2023 reached 4.8, up from 4.4 per 10,000 recorded in 2022 and in line with pre-pandemic figures. In 2023, there were 0.43 ordinary admissions of women for violent incidents per 10,000 female patients. Minors featured the highest rate, with 0.78 admissions per 10,000 patients, followed by adult women aged 18-34 (0.74 per 10,000). The incidence of ordinary admissions of foreign women was six times higher than that of Italian women, respectively, 21.8 admissions for violent incidents per 10,000 compared to 3.7.

In the case of girls under the age of 18, the diagnoses most frequently reported in ordinary admissions for violent incidents relate to child maltreatment, sexual abuse of a minor, unspecified abuse of a minor, observation for suspected abuse and neglect.

In the case of women aged 18 and over, the most frequently reported diagnoses in ordinary admissions for violent incidents relate to unspecified adult maltreatment, observation following alleged rape or seduction, sexual abuse of adults and personal history of psychological trauma from physical violence.

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[16] <https://www.istat.it/statistiche-per-temi/focus/violenza-sulle-donne/il-fenomeno/violenza-e-accesso-delle-donne-al-pronto-soccorso/>

### 3.3.2 The free nationwide emergency 1522 helpline service for women victims of violence and stalking

The 1522<sup>[17]</sup> helpline is a primary public contact for helping women who are victims of male violence and stalking. Istat provides information on requests for help to the nationwide free 1522 helpline and publishes data on a quarterly basis. The data can be used to monitor the phenomenon of violence against women, especially regarding trends in requests for help. In the first three quarters of 2024<sup>[18]</sup>, for example, a total of 43,338 valid requests were received by the 1522 helpline, up by a significant 58.1% compared to the same period in 2023. The fourth quarter of 2024 confirmed this upward trend, with an 8.8% increase in calls, totalling 16,710.

As a rule, calls to the 1522 helpline follow a downward trend throughout the year, peaking in the fourth quarter thanks to enhanced awareness associated with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. However, the high number of contacts recorded in the fourth quarter of 2023, with 21,132 valid calls, seems to have also influenced the first three quarters of 2024, keeping request levels higher than in previous quarters. In the first three quarters of 2024 significant changes were recorded, compared to the previous year: +83.5% in the first quarter, +57.4% in the second and +37.3% in the third.

Regarding the main reasons why people call the 1522 helpline, at the top of the list are requests for clarifications concerning legal measures affording protection to victims of violence, information on anti-violence centres, and details on the services offered by the helpline. Compared to the same period in 2023, these reasons increased, respectively, by 87.8%, 77.1% and 74%.

In 2024, there was a 32.5% increase in requests for help with stalking-related issues, compared to 2023.

The data provides information on the communication channels through which both users and victims contact the 1522 service. Communication campaigns are the most effective and provided a significant contribution to dissemination of the service in all quarters of 2024. As many as 17,691 people indicated these campaigns as the source of their knowledge about the 1522 helpline, up significantly compared to 2023.

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[17] The 1522 helpline is the free nationwide emergency service for women who are victims of violence and stalking, provided by the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to support and help victims of gender-based violence and stalking, in accordance with the Istanbul Convention. The helpline guarantees anonymity and covers various forms of violence on a 24/7 basis. The helpline also provides first aid information in emergencies or useful information on services and anti-violence centres operating in the area that callers can contact.

[18] <https://www.istat.it/notizia/il-numero-di-pubblica-utilita-1522-anni-2013-2024/>

The Internet, however, remains a key and more consistent channel for awareness, with 13,738 reports.

As in previous periods, the “principal” type of violence suffered by about half the victims continues to be physical violence (41.6%), followed by psychological violence (36%). In cases where victims suffered two or more types of violence, psychological violence emerges as the type most frequently associated with other forms of abuse, with a total of 7,653 incidents. Analysing all forms of reported violence, besides physical and psychological abuse, threats (7,378) and stalking offences (3,429) stand out among the most recurrent types, underlining the central role of the service in combating stalking. There is also a significant number of reports of economic violence, amounting to 3,372 cases.

In accordance with previous data, the length in time of the violent incidents is also a recurring element, with more than half the victims (55%) reporting that they had suffered violence for years. Such a prolonged exposure has a profound impact on the behaviour of the victims. The testimonies collected by the 1522 operators, in fact, show that 59.6% of victims suffer from anxiety and find themselves in a severe state of subjugation.

The home continues to be one of the places where incidents of violence occur most frequently. In 2024, the percentage of victims who specified their home as the place where the violence took place remained unchanged, standing at 71.4%. This figure confirms the high rate of cases of witnessed violence, with over half the victims (57%) having children, among which 47.5% reported having minor children. Furthermore, 22.4% of victims reported that their children witnessed and suffered abuse, while in 33.3% of cases the children only witnessed the abuse. The fact that the violence occurs mainly within household settings explains the prevalence of partners or ex-partners as the main perpetrators of the violence. Examining the data for 2023 and 2024, in 2024 there was an increase, compared to 2023, of ex-partners (+47.1%), cohabiting partners (+15.8%) and lovers (+44.2%) committing the violence.

Under-reporting is another trend confirmed in 2024, with 72.3% of victims calling the helpline having failed to report the violence to the competent authorities. The main reasons for this behaviour are, consistently, fear of the perpetrator's reactions, accounting for 34.7% of cases.

The 1522 helpline also acts as a networking hub with the local assistance services, putting victims in touch with the nearest available facilities. In 2024, like in the previous year, the service confirmed its primary role in directing victims to anti-violence centres and services, shelters and shelters, in 94.5% of cases. Therefore, the 1522 helpline continues to be a fundamental service for strengthening the local victim support and protection network.

### 3.3.3 Anti-violence centres (CAV) and shelters (CR)

In 2023, there was a total of 404 anti-violence centres and shelters<sup>[19]</sup> (+4.9% compared to 2022, +44% compared to 2017 – the first year of the survey), which provided essential support to the 61,514 women who contacted the CAVs at least once (+1.4% compared to 2021, +42% compared to 2017). A total of 4,631 women were referred to the CAVs by the 1522 helpline.

CAVs are open, on average, five days a week, for 5.8 hours a day. Outside opening hours, almost all CAVs (98.6%) guarantee an on-call service, with a 24-hour helpline for emergencies and managing dangerous situations, an answering machine, freephone number. In terms of the accessibility and proximity of these facilities to women, 54% of CAVs also manage local contact points that can provide services similar to the ones at the main facility, to ensure a broader outreach. In all anti-violence centres, women can access counselling, reception, and guidance or referral to other services within the local network, and in almost all cases they also receive legal support (99.7%) and psychological support (99.2%). Also widely available are job guidance services (96.7%), viable pathways for moving out of abusive relationships (93.1%), and support in finding the means for achieving independence (including financial support, food and clothing banks) (i.e. more than nine out of ten CAVs nationwide). More than eight out of ten CAVs also offer housing support and advice (89.5%), emergency response (87.7%), parenting support (85.1%) and linguistic-cultural mediation (82.1%). The service least provided to users (78.8% of CAVs) is child support.

CAV staff are trained and updated through in-house *ad hoc* courses (84% of cases). Ninety-one per cent of CAV staff receive training to deal with the different types of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.

CAVs are a fundamental source of training and information, including for the outside world and the community. 77.4% of CAVs have organised external training activities. Regarding the main targets of the training activities, 70.5% of CAVs targeted social workers, 58.7% healthcare professionals, 51.6% law enforcement agencies, and 42.3% lawyers, which proportions have remained virtually unchanged over time. CAVs also organise information campaigns aimed at schools (95.9% of cases) and cultural initiatives for the prevention of and raising awareness about violence against women (98.3%).

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[19] <https://www.istat.it/comunicato-stampa/i-centri-antiviolenza-e-le-donne-che-hanno-avviato-il-percorso-di-uscita-dalla-violenza-anno-2023-2/>

Since 2017, the percentage of CAVs financed exclusively by the public sector has increased (from 35.2% in 2017 to 49% in 2023), with the highest percentage in Southern Italy (62.9%). 44.6% of CAVs receive both public and private funding (51.4% in 2017), while the share of CAVs financed exclusively by private funds has dropped from 5.1% in 2017 to 1.7% in 2023. The number of CAVs that declare they do not receive any type of funding has dropped from 6.7% to 3.9%. A residual component of respondents (0.8%) does not receive funding and does not know whether it has received funds for specific projects from the DPO. This figure was 1.6% in 2017. 30.6% of CAVs have reported a balanced budget<sup>[20]</sup>, 32.5% have a negative budget and 36.9% a positive budget. CAVs in the North-West of Italy (45.3%) are more likely than others to report a budget deficit, while CAVs with a positive budget are more common in the North-East (52.5%).

At national level, CAVs can allocate €464 from their funds for each woman who contacts the Centre, a figure that has increased over time (it was €360 in 2017). However, the level of expenditure, in relation to the number of women who contact the CAVs, is also growing, up from €408 in 2017 to €458 in 2023.

Women victims of gender-based and domestic violence can find accommodation and safety at the shelters, which took in 3,054 abused women in 2023, up by 13.2% compared to 2022, when there were 2,698 guests. The growth is even higher compared to 2017, when the historical series began, from 1,786 women, up by 71.1%. In 2023, more than half the guests (63.1%, 1,928 women) were foreign women not permanently resident in the local community.

In the same year the number of shelters for women victims of violence continued to grow, thanks in part to increased funding from the DPO of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The number of facilities reached 464, up by 3.1% compared to 450 in 2022. This figure is particularly significant when considering that the number of shelters has more than doubled since 2017, the first year of the survey.

The average length of stay in these facilities has increased slightly, compared to the previous year. In 2023, it was 141 nights, on average, compared to 138 in 2022, up by 2.2%.

Shelters continue to provide an average capacity of 7.2 authorised beds, the same as in 2022, although additional beds are being made available, where possible, to meet the growing demand. In 2023, the average number of beds actually available was 8.6, slightly higher than 8.5 in 2022 (+1.2%). Despite this effort, 165 shelters reported problems in accommodating new guests due to lack of availability, and as many as 51 of these stated that their current capacity would need to at least triple to meet demand.

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[20] The balance sheet shows the difference between total public and private cash funding received and total expenses incurred for the operation of the centre.

The number of children accommodated is also increasing. In 2023, 2,875 minors were accommodated, up by 7.7% compared to 2022, when there were 2,670. Not all shelters allow children to be accommodated. 10 facilities (2.7%) do not accommodate children, while 117 accommodate them without restrictions. In most cases, however, there are restrictions, especially for boys. 169 shelters (45.1%) only accept children up to the age of 12/14, while a further 20% (75 facilities) allow children up to the age of 18. Some shelters also place restrictions on girls. 41 facilities accept them up to the age of 18, while 6 restrict acceptance to 12/14 years of age.

Shelters provide more than just physical protection. They also guarantee practical support for each woman on her pathway towards independence. Over 90% of the facilities offer guidance and support in respect of legal matters and local services, as well as psychological support, legal aid and help finding work and more permanent accommodation. There is also a special focus on minors, with over 87% of shelters providing educational and school support services, while 76.5% offer dedicated psychological support for children.

In 2023, 2,106 women left the shelters. Of these, 753 left because they had completed the empowerment programme designed with the shelters' staff, while 227 decided to return to their abuser and 235 dropped out of the empowerment programme altogether. The remaining 891 women left the shelters for other reasons, including transfer to other facilities or private homes and the end of their stay.

The distribution of these facilities is uneven across the country. Most shelters are concentrated in the north-west (36.4% of the total), followed by the north-east with 23.7%. The other areas of the country are way behind. The South only has 14.0% of the facilities, the Islands 13.8% and the Centre 12.1%. If we compare these percentages with the resident female population, we will see that in Italy there are only 0.15 shelters per 10,000 women. However, compared to only women victims of violence, the ratio rises to 1.99 shelters per 10,000 victims.

The regional differences stand out even more if we consider the density of the female population in the various regions. The North-West has 0.21 shelters per 10,000 women, followed by the Islands and the North-East, with 0.20 and 0.19 shelters per 10,000 women respectively. In contrast, the Centre and South rank much lower, with 0.09 shelters per 10,000 women, half that of the northern and island regions.

Another important aspect concerns the management of these facilities. Most shelters are sponsored by private organisations specialising in supporting and helping women victims of violence, although the figure has dropped slightly compared to the previous year. In 2023, 78.1% of facilities were run by private organisations, while in 2022 the percentage was 82.1%.

The highest proportion of private sponsors is found in the Islands, with 88.6%. On the other hand, Central Italy is the region with the highest presence of public-sector sponsors, with 33.3% of facilities run by the local authorities, either individually or in partnership.

In most cases, the sponsoring entity also runs the facility (82.1%). The sponsor differs from the operator (as in 67 out of 375 facilities) mostly in the case of public-sector sponsors, who then outsource the running of the facility to a private company (86.6% of cases), confirming the predominance of the private sector in running shelters.

In some cases, the women are accommodated in non-specialised residential facilities, either because they cannot find a place in a shelter or because they refuse to go there, preferring a facility that disrupts their routine as little as possible. In other situations, women who had previously stayed in a shelter can be moved to first and second level residential facilities, as a further step towards gaining their independence.

On 1 January 2023, there were 520 women victims of violence staying in 213 non-specialised residential facilities: 60.7% aged between 25 and 44, 26.6% aged between 18 and 24, and 12.7% aged between 45 and 64.

### **3.3.4 Local networks**

Istat has conducted an initial review of the role played by anti-violence centres and shelters at the local level in preventing and combating violence against women, by promoting training meetings with institutional actors and establishing intervention protocols focused on the different needs of victims (health, social, work, etc.) and aimed at enhancing the actions put into place. In 2024, Istat launched a systematic survey of local anti-violence networks, to investigate the multi-level governance models of the Istanbul Convention, working with regional authorities and third sector organisations to map the local protocols and agreements promoted by the CAVs and CRs and by other relevant local institutions (municipalities, health authorities, social services, courts, etc.).

The aim of the study is to further investigate the characteristics of these local networks and identify how their strengths, functionalities and added value help them respond to the need to safeguard, protect and bring about the independence of women victims of violence. By December 2024, 236 protocols had been collected from the 19 regions and two autonomous provinces.

Among the results of the survey is a special focus on the existence (or absence) of networks aimed at detecting the forms of violence among particularly vulnerable and fragile users, such as disabled women.

These are potential victims who often escape detection and reporting, due to both the lack of adequate channels of communication to report incidents of violence and their difficulty of recognising themselves as victims. Appropriate technical and analytical solutions should be implemented to highlight this aspect of the phenomenon, which is estimated to be very widespread, in proportional terms, since it is linked to multiple forms of discrimination.

### **3.4 Perpetrators of violence and the judicial process<sup>[21]</sup>**

According to data from 2022<sup>[22]</sup>, women victims of stalking totalled 12,928, equal to a rate of 42.8 women per 100,000. There were 19,963 reports of abuse by women against family members and partners (65.2 per 100,000 women) and 4,986 reports of sexual violence (16.5 per 100,000 women).

The perpetrators of violence are almost exclusively male.

The age group of victims in which the incidence of “early-warning offences” is highest is 35-44 years old, in the case of stalking and domestic abuse (100.1 and 141.4 victims per 100,000 women of the same age), and younger people aged 14 to 17, in the case of sexual violence (89.1 victims per 100,000 girls of the same age). Also in 2022, 1,092 reports were filed for the unlawful circulation of sexually explicit images or videos, about two-thirds (65.8%) of which reports were by women. The highest incidence of female victims was recorded in the 18-24 age group (9.3 reports per 100,000 women).

There were also 12 reports of coercion or inducement to marriage concerning women, four of whom were minors.

Patrol police officers responded to 1,608 calls for cases of alleged domestic violence.

Also regarding “early-warning offences”, the Department of Public Security of the Ministry of the Interior has provided data for the four-year period between 2020 and 2023<sup>[23]</sup>. The incidence of women among the total number of victims remained practically unchanged, at around 75% for stalking offences, 81% for abuse against family members and cohabiting partners, and between 91% and 93% for sexual violence.

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[21] For information on the judicial process: <https://www.istat.it/it/violenza-sulle-donne/il-percorso-giudiziario> - <https://www.istat.it/statistiche-per-temi/focus/violenza-sulle-donne/il-percorso-giudiziario/procedimenti-definiti-in-procura>

[22] <https://www.istat.it/files/2024/01/Audizione-Istat-Commissione-Femminicidio-23-gennaio-2024.pdf>

[23] <https://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/il-report-del-servizio-analisi-criminale-sulle-donne-vittime-di-violenza>

Regarding stalking offences, there was a sharp increase in the number of offences committed in 2021 (18,724 compared to 16,744 in 2020), with a trend that remained largely unchanged in the following two years. In the case of abuse against family members and cohabiting partners, there is an upward trend in offences committed until 2022, followed by a drop in 2023 (24,570 in 2022 compared to 24,474 in 2023).

According to the latest report published by Istat on homicide victims<sup>[24]</sup>, 334 homicides were recorded in 2023 (+3.7% compared to 2022), of which 117 women and 217 men. Men are mostly killed by strangers (0.37 per 100,000 males in 2023 and 2022; 0.27 in 2021) and women by their partners (0.21 per 100,000 women) or relatives (0.10 per 100,000 women, down from 0.14 in 2022). In cases where the perpetrator was identified, 88.9% of women were killed by a man, while in cases where the victim was a man, 80.6% of the killers were men. 74% of homicide victims were Italian citizens, while 26% were foreign nationals. 94.3% of Italian women were victims of Italian men, while 43.8% of foreign women are victims of men belonging to their own nationality.

In Italy, risk profiles by age show opposite trends based on gender. In the case of male victims, the highest-risk group is young men, with the risk increasing up to the 25–34 age group (1.63 per 100,000 inhabitants) and then gradually decreasing. The rate stands at 0.84 per 100,000 among 18- to 24-year-olds, 0.91 for 35- to 44-year-olds and 0.97 for 45- to 54-year-olds. Eighteen men were killed within organised crime groups, and 44.4% of them were under 34 years of age. Membership of criminal organisations does not play a specific role compared to other age groups. The reasons for which two-thirds of young adults (aged 25 to 34) were killed in 2023 were brawls (66.7%) or else remain unclear, despite the perpetrator having been identified (11.9%). In the case of women, on the other hand, the risk of becoming a victim of homicide increases with age and peaks among the very elderly (0.67 homicides per 100,000 women over the age of 84), especially at the hands of partners or family members. The latter often justify the homicide with the idea of ending the woman's suffering, or with signs of psychological imbalance; in the case of older women, these aspects account for more than half of homicide cases (55.5%). Women are mostly killed in family settings or within a relationship (approximately 81%), with no significant differences by age.

The EU average homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants in 2022 (the latest year available) is 0.9 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. Italy has the lowest incidence (0.55) among the 26 countries providing data for the year, after Slovenia, Spain and Poland (0.62, 0.69 and 0.72 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, respectively).

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[23] <https://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/il-report-del-servizio-analisi-criminale-sulle-donne-vittime-di-violenza>

[24] [Victims of homicide – Year 2023 – Istat](#)

At the opposite end of the spectrum are the Baltic countries, Luxembourg and Malta, with rates ranging from 3.57 in Latvia to 1.50 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in Estonia. In Italy, the female homicide rate too is below the European average. In 2022, out of a total of 117 women killed, it is estimated that 96 were femicides, with 63 women killed by a partner or ex-partner (61 of whom were male). This figure is in line with the figures for the last three years. “Gender-based homicides” therefore account for 82% of female homicides.

At European level, the rates of women killed by their partners in 2022 were highest in Lithuania (0.53 per 100,000 women), followed by Latvia (0.40), Slovenia (0.38), Hungary (0.34) and Germany (0.32). Malta’s rate is 0.8 per 100,000 women, but since it is a very small country, the figure is not stable (it was zero in 2021 and 0.4 in 2020). Again, Italy is below average (0.20 per 100,000 women).

Among the perpetrators reported, 19% have not been charged over time, and 22% are still under investigation. In 4% of cases, the complaint was withdrawn. 40% of the defendants were convicted; for 56%, the trial is still ongoing, while in 2% of cases, the perpetrator was acquitted. Even after indictment, there continue to be cases of withdrawal of the complaint (1%).

In addition to reporting the crime to the police, women were asked whether they had initiated legal proceedings in civil court or juvenile court following the violence experienced. Approximately 20% of women pursued such actions, with 10.1% initiating proceedings in civil court and an equal proportion in juvenile court. However, the available data are limited, covering slightly more than 50% of cases.

The information regarding the measures issued by these courts shows that in 77.9% of cases, the violence reported in the complaint, or in any criminal proceedings initiated or in the process of being initiated, was taken into account, while in approximately 7% of cases there was a discrepancy. These include 91 measures relating to women issued by civil courts, as opposed to the measures issued by criminal courts, 65 measures concerning minors, as opposed to those issued by criminal courts, and 58 measures that are inconsistent in both the civil and juvenile courts. In 55.6% of the measures issued by civil courts and/or juvenile courts, a request was made for assessing parenting capacity, in most cases for both parents.

A final focus concerns the statistical data collected on male prisoners, which shows that in 2019, there were 3,589 male prisoners<sup>[25]</sup> jailed for committing sexual violence, 3,438 for abuse against family members or children, 1,329 for stalking, 248 for assault and 217 for trafficking and enslavement.

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[25] Data on adults in correctional facilities are collected by the Prison Service (DAP) of the Ministry of Justice.

### 3.5 Centres for male perpetrators of violence (CUAVs)

The second national survey on counselling centres for male perpetrators of violence was conducted by the CNR-IRPPS in 2023<sup>[26]</sup>. This survey, conducted five years after from the first survey, provides an updated picture of the distribution and structural and organisational characteristics of these community-based facilities for men who wish (or have been invited) to attend programmes aimed at helping them change their attitude and behaviour, by acknowledging and accepting responsibility for their violent behaviour towards their partners, ex-partners and children.

The snapshot as of 31 December 2022 shows that 94 CUAVs have been set up, revealing a dynamic trend because only 54 had been mapped five years earlier. It is not uncommon for a single CUAV to have multiple locations (29%, compared to 71% with a single location), to provide for greater geographical coverage and the enhanced capacity to approach and provide care to men responsible for violence against women. Considering both primary and secondary facilities, their number has more than doubled in the specified period, from 69 to 141 points of access. The data show better geographical coverage in the northern regions of the country, while coverage is still patchy in the south, except for Puglia.

While the number of CUAV facilities has doubled, the number of men receiving care has more than tripled, from 1,214 in 2017 to 4,174 in 2022. Regarding the types of admission, the survey shows a drop in direct admissions, from 40% in 2017 to 10% in 2022, as a result of the overall increase in admissions driven by an increase in the number of men referred by the local services (from 56% to 85%). There is also a “Red Code” effect, since the incidence of men with suspended sentences among new admissions has gradually increased, from 19% in 2019 (when the so-called “Red Code” Law No. 69/2019 came into force) to 40% in 2022. In most of the cases handled by CUAVs, the offences committed by men with suspended sentences are abuse against and stalking of (former) partners (86% and 80% of CUAVs respectively), while about half the facilities provide care for men who abused their children (52%) and other family members (51%), or who committed sexual offences against adults (45%).

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[26] [https://www.irpps.cnr.it/25-novembre-seconda-indagine-nazionale-sui-centri-per-uomini-autori-di-violenza-cuav/25-novembre---Seconda-indagine-nazionale-sui-centri-per-uomini-autori-di-violenza-\(CUAV\)---Istituto-di-Ricerche-sulla-Popolazione-e-le-Politiche-Sociali](https://www.irpps.cnr.it/25-novembre-seconda-indagine-nazionale-sui-centri-per-uomini-autori-di-violenza-cuav/25-novembre---Seconda-indagine-nazionale-sui-centri-per-uomini-autori-di-violenza-(CUAV)---Istituto-di-Ricerche-sulla-Popolazione-e-le-Politiche-Sociali) A post from Monia Torre on Istituto di Ricerche sulla Popolazione e le Politiche Sociali (<https://www.irpps.cnr.it>).

Qualitative studies have highlighted how the increase in men with suspended sentences, or referred by other local actors, such as law enforcement authorities, has obliged the operators of these centres to change their daily practices, in particular by providing preliminary work aimed at encouraging greater adherence to the objectives of the programmes, since these men are often motivated by purely self-serving interests.

The main services provided by CUAVs are telephone counselling (83%) and psychological counselling (73%). 64% of the facilities implement educational modules on gender-based violence, 50% provide individual psychotherapy sessions, 46% parental responsibility support and 34% group psychotherapy. Other services provided by more than 10% of the facilities include linguistic-cultural mediation (16%) and legal counselling (12%). Not all services are provided free of charge. Those that most commonly require payment include individual psychotherapy sessions (in 26% of CUAVs), psychological counselling (22%), educational modules on gender-based violence, group psychotherapy (both 14%) and support for parental responsibility (13%).

Five years on from the first survey, we see that the number of centres carrying out risk assessments has increased (80% compared to 69% in 2017), mainly due to the proportion of those that carry out the risk assessments applying an internal protocol (35% compared to 25% in 2017). On the other hand, the incidence of those adopting an internationally or nationally recognised protocol is very similar (45% in 2022 and 44% in 2017). The proportion of CUAVs that carry out performance assessments has not changed significantly, standing at around 60% in both surveys. Although these are mostly self-assessments, the proportion of centres using external auditors has more than doubled (from 6% in 2017 to 15% in 2022), reflecting the growing focus on accountability in working with perpetrators of violence.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the second national survey focused on community-based programmes, which does not rule out the possibility that CUAV managers may also enter into partnerships for implementing programmes within correctional facilities. Pending further investigation of the prison system, it should be mentioned here that just under half of the CUAV managers surveyed (42, equal to 45%) have established partnerships with around 60 correctional facilities to implement in-prison programmes. A total of 973 prisoners were enrolled in these programmes among the 38 CUAVs that provided data.

## PART II

# Areas of intervention of the 2021-2023 national strategic plan



In accordance with the Preamble to the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, the National Strategic Plan on male violence against women 2021–2023 has outlined an intervention strategy based on the acknowledgement of male violence as a social and cultural mechanism that reproduces and reinforces discrimination against women. Gender-based violence is therefore framed as a structural and systemic phenomenon affecting women, since it is ingrained in a social and cultural construct that justifies power inequalities between the sexes, across geographical areas, socio-economic conditions and religions.

The 2021-2023 Plan has adopted a more comprehensive theoretical approach compared to previous programming cycles. Besides defining male violence against women as a serious violation of human rights, thus elucidating the national and international regulatory framework, it has also introduced a comprehensive and structured system inspired by principles such as the right to live free from violence, gender equality, gender mainstreaming, female empowerment and multiple discrimination. Furthermore, by explicitly pursuing the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2026, it aims to contribute synergistically to achieve the objectives of substantive equality between women and men.

An element of substantial continuity with the previous three-year strategy is the structure of the Plan, which is based on four thematic Pillars (prevention, protection, punishment and assistance, and promotion), with the addition of international cooperation. The structure is designed to provide a comprehensive framework within which to address the issue, which is a complex phenomenon, and promote coordinated governance. For this purpose, the 2021–2023 Plan confirms an approach that is at the same time: multilevel, as it involves institutional actors operating at different levels of government; multisectoral, as it integrates policies, services, and interventions from different yet interconnected areas; and multi-stakeholder, as it provides for the involvement of a wide range of relevant actors. The multi-stakeholder approach is necessary for ensuring full compliance with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, which enjoins on the signatory states the duty to develop integrated and coordinated policies and implement measures, across all levels of government, aimed at preventing and combating male violence against women and protecting women.

In accordance with the previous strategy, the Plan also defines itself as “a tool for developing cross-cutting, comprehensive and coherent policies to combat male violence against women”, in the section on commitments, presenting proposals tailored to the remits of the central government and regional and local authorities, as well as economic and social partners. Furthermore, a dedicated chapter sets out the responsibilities of all the actors involved in implementing the measures, namely, the coordinating body of the institutional actors, central government, regions, municipalities/provinces/metropolitan cities, socio-economic partnerships, national and local associations, and the political and technical governance structures of the Plan, consisting of the Steering Committee and the National Observatory, respectively.

Other innovations include the incorporation of violence prevention policies within the country's growth policies, and in the more general strategic framework for recovery, also promoted at EU level, and the focus on less developed areas, urban peripheries and areas with high unemployment rates, where both public and private intervention is needed to bridge the gap between supply and demand of opportunities and qualified services for women.

The following section illustrates the interventions carried out by the central government and regional authorities, based on the monitoring data collected, and provides useful information for the development of the next national strategy.

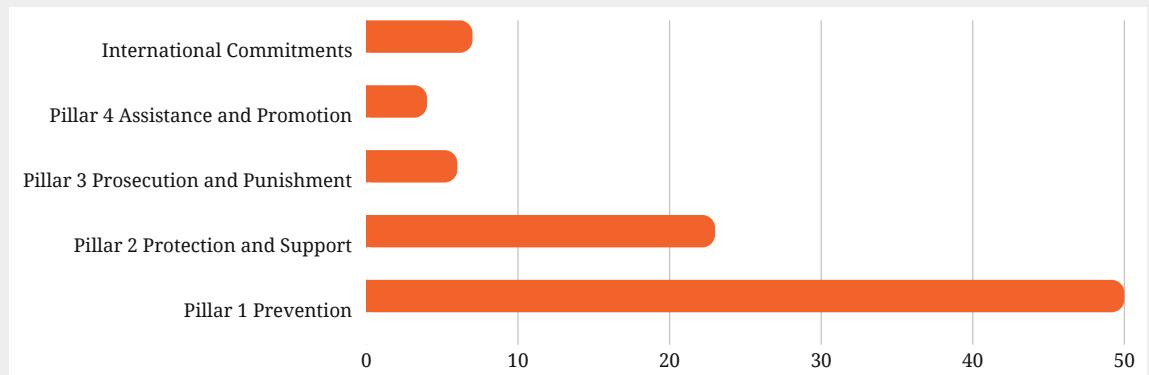
An overview of the measures implemented by the central government<sup>[27]</sup> allows the identification, in general terms, of the Pillars, priorities and actions for focusing the efforts to combat male violence against women during the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan.

Overall, interventions are planned across all Pillars of the Plan, with an increased incidence of Pillar 1 “Prevention” and Pillar 2 “Protection and Support”.

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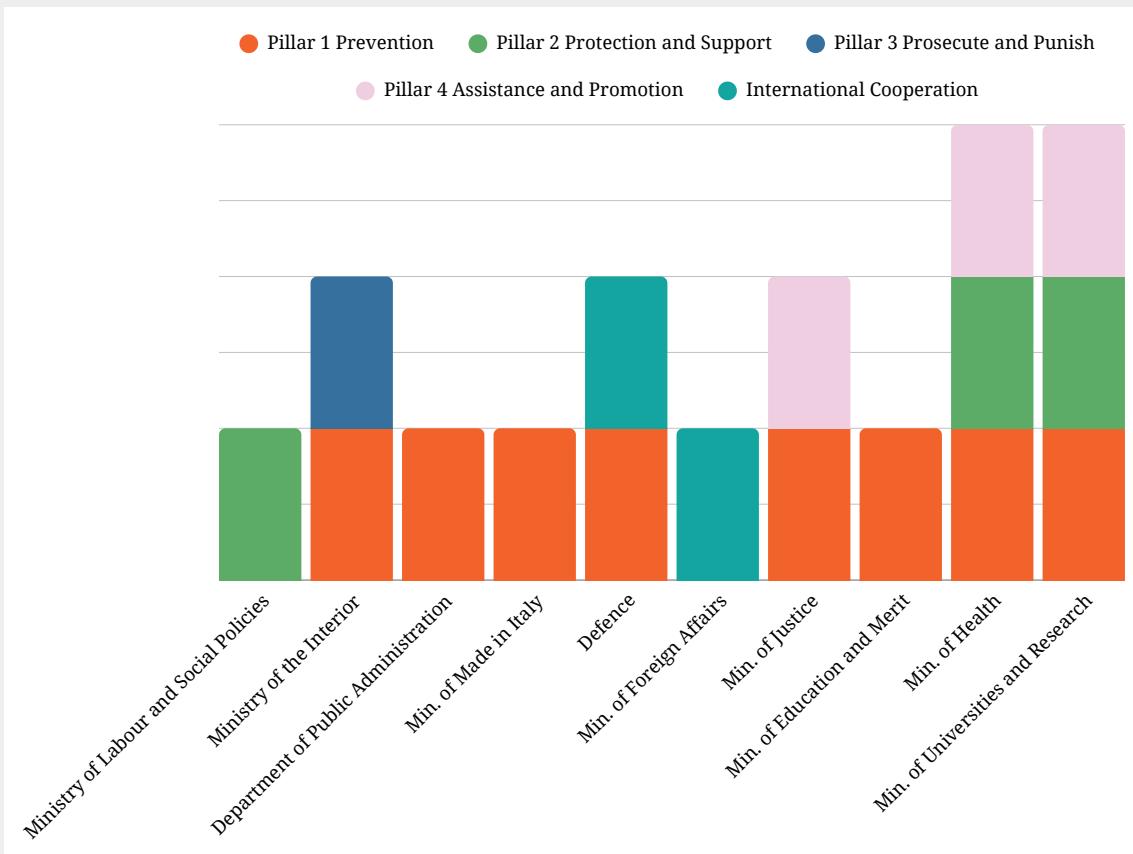
[27] The information has been sourced from the monitoring reports on the implementation of the 2021-2023 National Strategic Plan submitted by the government departments (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of University and Research, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Made in Italy, Minister for Disability, Department of Public Administration).

**Fig. n. 1 - Central government interventions on the Pillars of the PSN**



Some government departments have planned interventions involving several Pillars and/or different Priorities within the same Pillar, as in the case of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence.

**Fig. n. 2 - Areas of intervention by central government departments in relation to the Pillars of the Strategic Plan**



For a more immediate understanding of the nature of the interventions, we can see how the central government departments have singled out a select group of Priorities for enhanced planning, primarily within the first three Pillars of the Plan, showing distinctive features:

- a prevalence of activities in the training sector, aimed at increasing the skills of operators engaged in a range of activities not specifically linked to interventions involving women victims of male violence (teachers, journalists, etc.). The data highlights the fact that the Institutions recognise the predominant role played primary and secondary prevention interventions, through awareness-raising projects and related topics (use of language, gender roles, etc.);
- the need to provide targeted training for the people involved in all stages of the process of helping women escape violence, enabling them to acquire the specific professional skills needed to improve the effectiveness of the tools and actions.

Training, therefore, can be defined as a cross-cutting activity, because, although logically related to the Prevention Pillar, it can help achieve the objectives set out in the other Strategic Pillars, taking on specific objectives and goals depending on the different areas and contexts in which it is provided.

At the regional level, specific trends can be identified by analysing the results of monitoring use of the resources from the rights and equal opportunities policy Fund allocated each year by the relevant Decrees of the President of the Council of Ministers (abbreviated in Italian as DPCM)<sup>[28]</sup>, for the years 2019-2022.

Regarding the regional measures referred to in Article 5 of Decree-Law No. 93 of 2014, letters a), b), c), e), f), h), i) and l)<sup>[29]</sup>, it appears that, in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, most of the Regions implemented the measures relative to (see fig. no. 3):

- housing support and job reintegration (18 regions);
- promoting information, communication and training activities (17 regions);
- developing and supporting public and private services networks (16 regions);
- rehabilitating male perpetrators of violence (13 regions).

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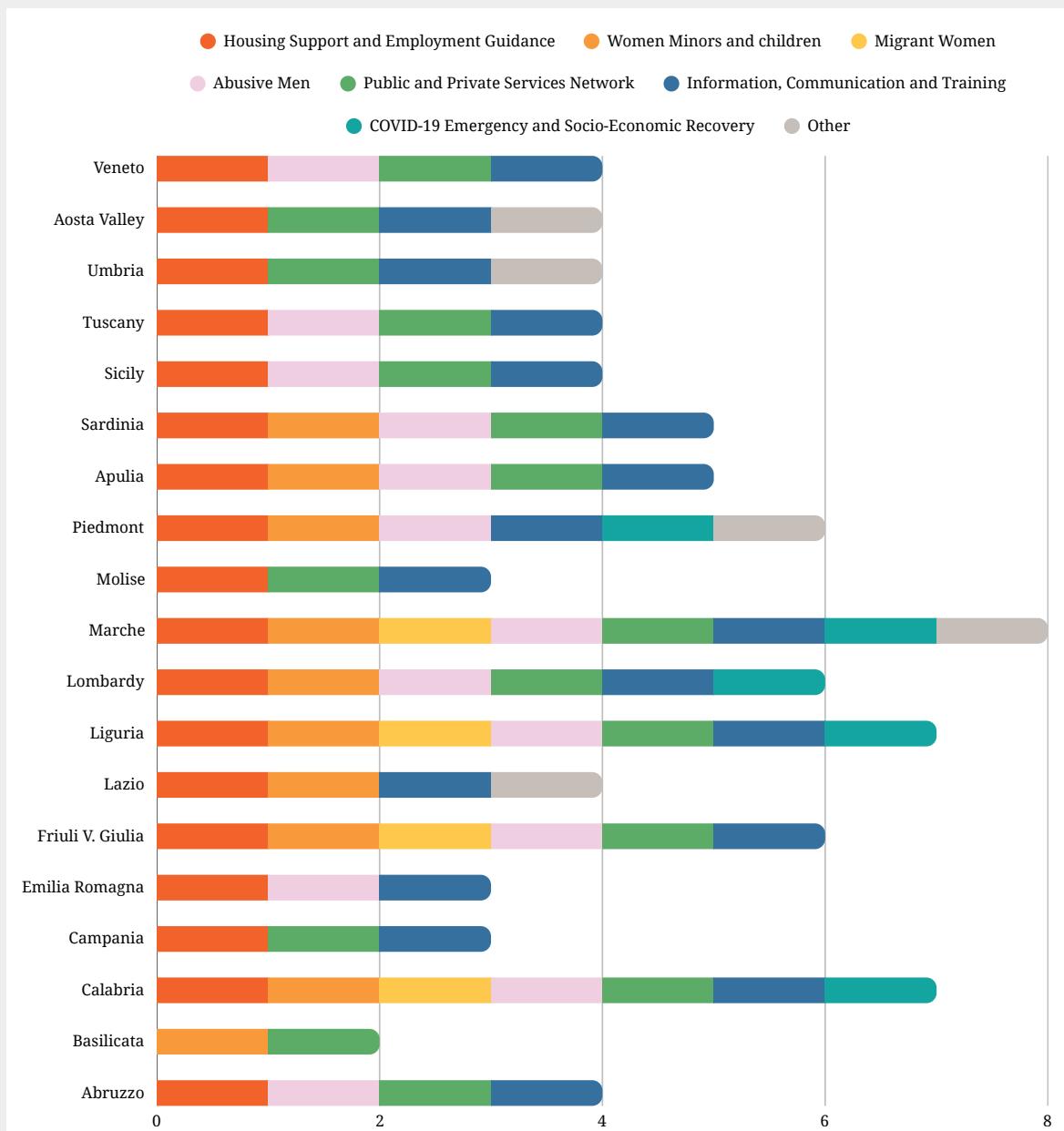
[28] The Department for Equal Opportunities allocates financial resources annually to the Regions, in implementation of Articles 5 and 5 bis of the Decree-Law of 14 August 2013, amended and converted by Law No. 119 of 15 October 2013, for:

- the anti-violence centres and shelters (Article 2);
- the regional interventions referred to in Article 5 of Decree-Law No. 93 of 2014, letters a), b), c), e), f), h), i) and l) (Article 3).

The DPCM specifies that the resources referred to in Article 3 are allocated to the Regions in accordance with the objectives of the National Strategic Plan on Male Violence against Women (first 2017-2020 and then 2021-2023).

[29] Art. 3 Dpcm

**Fig. n 3 - Areas of intervention of the Regions DPCM 2019-2022 (pursuant to Article 3)**



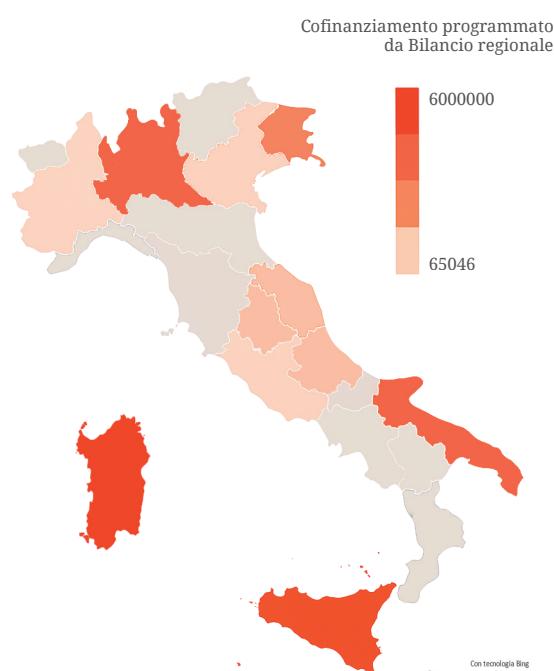
Some intervention categories should be considered in relation to their relevant time frame. For example, measures to support the Covid-19 emergency were implemented in 2020 and 2021, while reference to Covid-19 was removed from the 2022 DPCM and the name of the measure modified to include only the part that mentions supporting the economic and social recovery of women in their pathway out of violence.

Likewise, the measures for supporting male perpetrators of violence were no longer included in the list of interventions under Article 3, and were therefore removed from the 2022 DPCM, effective that same year, in accordance with the ad hoc DPCMs issued in implementation of Article 26 bis of Decree-Law No 34 of 2020.

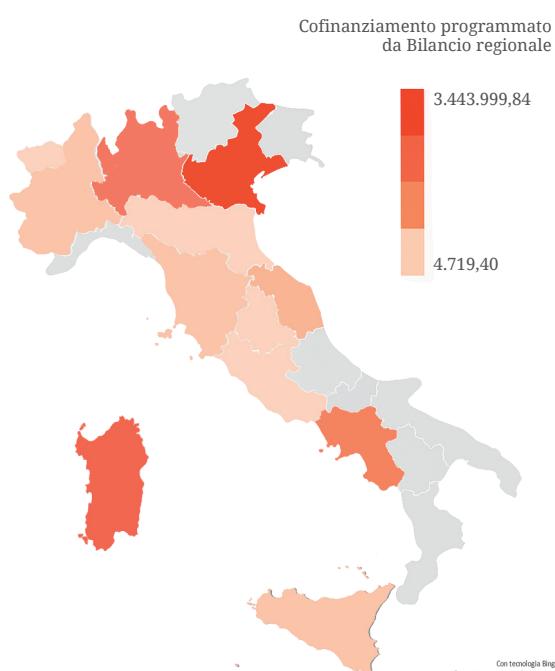
The measures implemented with the annually allocated resources were also partly co-financed with regional resources:

- 11 regions co-financed, together with the resources referred to in the 2019-2022 DPCMs, interventions in favour of anti-violence centres (CAVs) and shelters (CRs) (see Fig. 4), while 12 regions co-financed regional interventions consistent with the National Strategic Plan (see Fig. 5);
- in most cases, the regions co-financed both types of intervention (Lazio, Lombardy, Marche, Piedmont, Sardinia, Sicily, Umbria and Veneto).

**Fig. n. 4 Co-financing of CAV and CR measures – Art. 2 DPCM 2019-2022**



**Fig. n. 5 Co-financing of regional measures – Art. 3 DPCM 2019-2022**



## Co-funding from the Regional Budget

## 1. Areas of intervention and actions of the Department for Equal Opportunities

The Department for Equal Opportunities was at the forefront of the governance, monitoring, and strategic and operational coordination actions implemented at both central and regional level, regarding the Priorities included in Pillar 4 “Assistance and Promotion” of the Plan. In particular, the monitoring of the use of resources allocated annually to the regions through DPCMs has been significantly strengthened since 2020.

The DPO has also played a key role in managing and coordinating the inter-institutional Steering Committee and the Observatory on violence against women and domestic violence, involving both institutional stakeholders and third-sector operators actively engaged in providing support to women victims of male violence. The box below contains a list of the main measures implemented by the DPO, on top of the activities planned under the allocation plans referred to in the annual decrees enacted, since 2014, to finance the measures aimed at strengthening the structures and services provided by the CAVs and CRs. The measures are developed within the framework of various Pillars and Priorities of the Plan, through funding and governance actions, as summarised below:

### Pillar 1

- Signing of a MoU by the Ministry for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Education and Merit and the Ministry of Culture, aimed at promoting joint projects for schools aimed at raising awareness about preventing violence against women and domestic violence. Publication of the call for competition “*Da uno sguardo*”, editions I and II.
- Preparation and dissemination of a White Paper for Training in the field of violence against women, curated by the Technical and Scientific Committee of the Observatory on violence against women and domestic violence.
- Preparation of an integrated communication plan based on the differentiation of content, procedures and media, in connection with communication campaigns, based on targets, content, communication channels and the messages to be conveyed.
- Public notice for financing information and awareness-raising projects targeting the prevention of male violence against women and for promoting good practices in the integrated care programmes implemented by the local anti-violence networks aimed at women victims of male violence.
- Awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women and for promoting the emergency 1522 helpline.
- Renewal of the 1522 helpline ad translated into 11 languages.





## **Pillar 2**

- Introduction and strengthening of the “Freedom of Income” allowance for women victims of violence.
- Promotion and management of microcredit measures, in partnership with the National Microcredit Agency (ENM) and the Italian Banking Association (ABI), the Italian Federation of Cooperative Credit and Rural Banks (Federcasse) and Caritas Italiana.
- Implementation of initiatives aimed at promoting and supporting the empowerment of women victims of violence.
- Signing of a MoU by the Ministry for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities, the Italian Banking Association (ABI) and the Foundation for Financial and Savings Education (FEduF) for promoting projects against economic violence.

## **Pillar 3**

- Promotion of a bill for enhancing prevention measures, in Italian criminal law (Government bill unanimously approved as Law no. 168 of 24 November 2023 containing *“Provisions for combating violence against women and domestic violence”*).

## **Pillar 4**

- Promotion and support of the national anti-violence policy governance system, consisting of the inter-institutional Steering Committee and the Observatory on violence against women and domestic violence.
- Agreements on the minimum requirements of anti-violence centres and shelters and the counselling centres for the male perpetrators of violence.
- Collaboration agreements between DPO and ISTAT, and DPO and CNR, for developing an integrated information system on gender-based violence (ISTAT) and study and research activities on the phenomenon of violence, to support national policymaking (CNR).

## **1.1 Actions from the 2021-2023 Plan to be continued in the 2025-2027 three-year period**

The resulting picture, in connection with the topics elaborated on in the following paragraph 1.2 “Lessons learned and focus points for the 2025-2027 National Strategic Plan”, shows that there are areas that require targeted planning, by the central and regional governments, to achieve the objectives of the Plan:

- there is a need to increase systemic actions, at the general and sectoral level, for strengthening the tools for tackling and combating the phenomenon of violence, and for specific measures of enhancement and empowerment that can only be developed at the central level, which has both the remit and the skills;
- there is a clear difference between the regions which, if confirmed, would require qualitative and quantitative alignment measures to ensure that the regional context is uniformly capable of addressing the phenomenon of male violence against women.

The planning proposals for new actions included in the Plan focus primarily on Pillars 1 and 2.

Regarding Pillar 1, specialised prevention measures are required to define the target and scope of the intervention. For example, explicit reference is made to social media and the Internet, to combat the spread of images and messages that incite violence against women and sexist behaviour, as well as to improve sentiment. Further impetus comes from the final document of the Working Group on Violence against Women with Disabilities of the National Observatory on the Condition of Persons with Disabilities, which emphasises the need to use specific language and tools for people with specific disabilities, such as deaf or blind people.

Within the framework of this “specialised” prevention action, it is crucial to systematically arrange the interventions by the Ministry of Education and Merit and the Ministry of University and Research, in relation to actions engaging young people in schools and universities, taking into account their age, the content and the areas in which they are meant to act.

The Regions have identified specific actions, both in support of women victims of multiple discrimination, with a particular focus on older women, and targeting men, designing effective campaigns for influencing their behaviour and thinking beyond the most widespread gender stereotypes.

Regarding Pillar 2, the Regions have placed empowerment, financial independence and housing at the heart of their new action proposals, by strengthening the regional network and also engaging the government departments, which are central to the development of a new culture capable of welcoming women victims of violence and offering them an alternative life.

Regarding Pillar 3, a number of priorities for action have emerged, mainly focusing on monitoring the timing of the various stages of the judicial process, from when the violence is reported, and providing specific training for all the actors, including the judicial authorities involved in the judicial and detention process, to ensure the safety of women, as well as monitoring the use and functioning of protective devices (e.g. electronic tags).

Regarding Pillar 4, and specifically point 4.1, the National Institute of Statistics<sup>[30]</sup> and the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, provide an integrated information framework on violence against women in Italy.

Furthermore, Istat has set up a round table with the Department for Equal Opportunities, the Regions and anti-violence centres to share experiences, develop a common language, improve existing information flows and implement new flows to fill information gaps.

The importance of conducting specific surveys on persons with disabilities and the need to strengthen the protection system for women with disabilities are also emphasised.

A further critical issue is the economic vulnerability of many women entering the protection system. This significantly hinders their ability to escape violence, maintaining their economic dependence on the perpetrator. The next Plan must therefore define and monitor measures to support women in this regard as well.

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[30] Istat is committed to providing quality information and indicators on the phenomenon, by integrating data from various sources such as Istat itself, the Department for Equal Opportunities, government departments, regions, anti-violence centres, shelters and other services, such as the free nationwide emergency 1522 helpline service. Documents on Italian and European policies to combat violence, prevention, training activities in schools and for operators, as well as statistical and analytical reports are also made available. Some data can be found on the previous pages. The system comes from the National Plan against Violence against Women and is intended to operate as a privileged observatory to enable government bodies, and all public and private entities involved in combating gender-based violence, to monitor and combat the various aspects of the phenomenon with appropriate means, to achieve the objectives of the Istanbul Convention. Regarding point 4.2, Law No. 53 provides for the measurement of violence against women, a law that has not yet been fully implemented, especially regarding judicial data. Lacking this data, it will not be possible to monitor the laws defined in recent years, the current and special measures taken by the courts against defendants and convicted persons. This issue is, of course, important, as also the need for greater coordination between the laws on gender-based violence and violence against women.

## **1.2 Lessons learned and focus points for the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan**

The 2017-2020 national strategy against male violence against women, prepared in accordance with the Istanbul Convention, represented a turning point in national policies for the prevention and combating of male violence against women, acknowledging its structural nature and outlining a comprehensive and coherent set of measures for the protection of women victims of violence and their children, in view of preventing the phenomenon, punishing the perpetrators of violence and developing a body of knowledge for combating the phenomenon more effectively.

The 2021-2023 Plan too reflects this approach, adopting a multi-actor, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach, at the different levels of government involved in planning and implementing measures to prevent and combat violence, as well as their financing, and actively engaging the stakeholders in this field. When evaluating the 2021-2023 Plan, there should be a special focus on the development of “integrated and coordinated policies” and, therefore, on effective governance and activating processes capable of coordinating the actors involved in implementing the policies.

The evaluation carried out has highlighted certain characteristics resulting from the implementation of the 2021-2023 Plan, partly developed during the previous three-year strategic planning period due to the continuity between the two planning cycles. These findings are summarised as follows:

- the investments in the Plans have consisted primarily of financial support for anti-violence centres, shelters and other facilities for women victims of violence. In terms of violence prevention, awareness-raising projects and investigation activities have been carried out in the relevant areas, in addition to training programmes for public and private sector front-line professionals who provide assistance to the victims and perpetrators of the violence;
- the ad hoc surveys carried out by the CNR, as part of the evaluation process, have also highlighted that the actors implementing the Plan, in many cases, focused primarily on their specific missions and competences, interpreting the guidelines of the Plan according to the specificities of their respective remits. This approach has contributed, at times, to hindering the creation of synergies and a more integrated approach between the levels of governance, and emphasised the need to strengthen coordination both horizontally between the sectors, and vertically, between the institutional levels;
- the surveys conducted have revealed that some of the local stakeholders perceived a certain “distance” from the National Strategy. This is particularly significant because the regions, local authorities and communities, anti-violence

centres and shelters and, more generally, the various stakeholders in the anti-violence policies are directly involved in implementing the measures in the local areas and communities and face various concrete challenges on a daily basis. The evidence collected points to the necessity for more participatory, structured and continuous processes to enhance the needs and experiences accrued at local level;

- the general aim of ensuring uniform actions for guaranteeing the rights of women victims of violence and their children across the country seems hard to implement in practice. Anti-violence policies, which fall within the remit of the regions, have evolved from the specific needs of different local areas and within very different regulatory frameworks. Even the regional models of organisation of support services for women victims of violence and their children differ considerably, despite the approval, in 2014, of the Agreement on the minimum requirements for anti-violence centres andshelters, especially regarding the capacity of the managing bodies to provide adequate financial and human resources for ensuring the quality standards referred to in the relevant legislation;
- there are significant regional differences also regarding the other actions mentioned in the Plan, such as the empowerment of women victims of violence, raising awareness in local communities, staff training, school-based awareness projects, strengthening local networks, support for children witnessing violence, support for migrant women victims of violence, women with disabilities, women with addiction problems and other forms of vulnerability;
- finally, the feasibility of the strategy proposed by the 2021-2023 Plan (as well as by the 2017-2020 Plan) based on a complex multifaceted structure, a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approach and multi-level governance. Such complexity, in fact, requires dedicated and specialised human resources.

Based on the analyses carried out, some areas for improvement have been identified, in relation to the 2025-2027 Plan:

- further strengthening inter-institutional coordination and adopting dedicated tools for improving the effectiveness and impact of anti-violence policies, optimising resources and promoting greater integration between the actors involved;
- investing more resources in strengthening intervention monitoring processes, to enable the constant all-round observation of the processes related to the interventions for preventing and combating violence. To this end, the monitoring system should also include opportunities for discussion between the actors involved, to improve transparency, learning and continuous improvement;

- implementing integration mechanisms to encourage continuous dialogue and ensure effective information sharing between the governance bodies responsible for overseeing the Plan and the other institutional bodies (e.g. Parliament, Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry on Femicide);
- promoting continuous, transparent and structured discussion between central and regional levels of governance, with a view to optimising the use of resources, ensuring greater consistency between interventions and improving the overall effectiveness of the actions for combating violence. Without prejudice to the processes activated under the two Agreements, and the necessary meetings for planning and implementing the decrees allocating the funds under Law 119/2013, each Region is engaged in independently implementing the measures to prevent and combat violence, in accordance with the general guidelines of the Plan. Greater transparency is also needed regarding the measures implemented at local level, to avoid unnecessary duplication and overlapping;
- further strengthening synergies between anti-violence policies – managed by the Department for Equal Opportunities and the relevant regional authorities – and other sectoral policies (e.g. employment, health, education). With this in mind, permanent inter-departmental working groups could be set up, also within the Observatory, engaging the main stakeholders, as a means of identifying possible overlapping areas, synergies and practical solutions to critical issues;
- discussions around the effectiveness and efficiency of the interventions should take into account the need for adequate financial and human resources for both the coordination and implementation of anti-violence policies.



## PART III

# The commitments of the plan



The 2025-2027 Plan aims to bring about and, above all, strengthen the conditions for assuring the wide-reaching and lasting success of the interventions for combating male violence against women. To this end, both the underlying principles of the 2021-2023 Plan, inspired by the Istanbul Convention, and its structural elements (seen as still valid and relevant today in terms of their strategic vision and effective actions) shall be continued unaltered. This consolidated framework will allow us to further strengthen the cooperation, integration and harmonisation of the experiences learned to date, and concretely impact on the conditions required to fully guarantee the rights of women.

This Plan, in fact, should serve as a foundation for developing cross-cutting, comprehensive and consistent policies for combating male violence against women, enhancing the responsibilities of the “institutional actors” and encouraging “thematically” and “geographically” diversified interventions by the central, regional and local governments, as well as economic and social partnerships. In order to achieve this objective and building on the lessons learned during the previous period, there should be a renewed focus on the governance bodies and the implementation tools associated with the Plan, in accordance with Law No. 234 of 2021, which has bolstered its guidance, coordination and monitoring functions.

The framework also involved consulting with the stakeholders, who were interviewed by the Observatory on Violence about the priorities for the 2025-2027 Plan and agreed not to change the strategic and operational platform of the 2021-2023 Plan, acknowledging the significance and validity of the shared framework approach, albeit without prejudice to possible adjustments that might become necessary in light of emerging needs.

This Plan, therefore, reaffirms the core importance of preventing and combating violence against women within the broader framework of growth and support policies for the country's full recovery, consistently with the European guidelines and as a new and further step forward towards achieving long-term strategic objectives. The strategy and actions of the Plan, in fact, are grounded on the opportunities offered by the European structural and investment funds and by the European Union's directly managed programmes for the 2021-2027 period, as well as on the contribution of the Next Generation EU initiative and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). Most of the investment processes were already underway at the time of its approval.

A key feature of the Plan is its nationwide scope, building on the results of the previous plans, which have made it easier to identify the different forms which male violence against women can take, as well as the contexts, areas and regions where the interventions for preventing and combating violence against women should be planned and widely implemented on a priority basis. Such contexts include urban peripheries and areas with high unemployment rates and with little or no services for assisting women and supporting their (re)integration into the labour market and civil society.

Against this backdrop, the local (public, private or third sector) welfare system is tasked with bridging the gap between supply and demand of opportunities and qualified services for women, to consolidate the capacity of local governance hubs, such as the anti-violence networks, to guarantee safe conditions and promote pathways out of violence based on women's self-determination and empowerment. In this same perspective, improvements in the planning, implementation, execution and monitoring of policies, at various levels of responsibility and competence, aim to contribute to the construction of a shared and inclusive culture of the policies designed to combat male violence against women<sup>[31]</sup>.

Proposed actions will be developed based on the definitions and methodologies of intervention set out in the White Paper on Training (see paragraph 2), to ensure the consistency and uniformity of the Plan.

Although the Plan refers to a three-year horizon, it has been established that it will continue to be applied until the adoption of the next plan and it may be updated and revised even during its period of validity, where necessary.

Furthermore, the Plan will be implemented with the resources available under current legislation, without prejudice to any additional appropriations.

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[31] This aim is also pursued through the inclusion, in the scope of the Plan, of the Final Document of the Working Group on Violence against Women with Disabilities, produced by the National Observatory on the Condition of Persons with Disabilities, and of the recommendations in the Report on “Prejudice and Violence against Women” by the Criminal Analysis Service of the Ministry of the Interior, which focuses specifically on women with disabilities who are victims of male violence.

## **The structure of the Plan: Pillars, Priorities, Areas of intervention**

The structure of the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan, like the two previous plans, is made up of *Pillars* inspired by the Istanbul Convention, each of which is broken down into *Priorities* and specific *Areas of intervention* of significant national and regional interest, updated according to the results of a participatory consultation process carried out within the National Observatory on Violence. The preliminary discussions leading to the drafting of this Plan involved actors such as the central and regional governments, experts from economic and social partnerships, and third sector organisations working to combat male violence against women.

The Pillars described below address the main challenges faced, when combating male violence against women, and define the most significant fields of intervention. Alongside these are interventions with an international scope, in terms of representation and cooperation, which are dealt with separately since they include content that is complementary to the Pillars but related to a specific area. Next, a specific section is dedicated to the governance of the Plan, in view of the need to modify and strengthen the organisation, to enhance the effectiveness of the guidance, coordination, monitoring and evaluation processes, consistently with the multi-tier structure outlined by the Strategy and with the recently introduced regulatory guidelines.

The operational aspects of the 2025-2027 Plan are presented in the Appendix, which contains a list of the initial actions to be implemented after the adoption of the Plan. The measures largely mirror those referred to in the 2021-2023 Plan and essentially consist of the implementation of systemic actions and of the positive actions already activated. At the same time, certain actions will be adapted to new needs through the re-engineering of tools and procedures, while new and innovative measures will also be introduced. A range of initiatives are currently at different stages of development, and the investments made under the Plan will aim, *inter alia*, to realign and readjust the existing tools to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency.

As anticipated in several sections of the Plan, there are many elements of continuity and similarity with the 2021-2023 Plan, to enable this complex and multi-level strategy to pursue its purpose seamlessly within a medium to long-term time horizon. The 2025-2027 planning process will therefore continue to address unresolved issues and new phenomena, continuing the work of breaking up those stereotypes and attitudes that are harmful to the dignity and lives of women and their children, according to a complex and integrated perspective capable of engaging all the members of a modern society.

The Plan features recurring cross-sectoral themes (such as training), in order not to compress the specific features and different facets in the implementation stage. The themes are addressed on a case-by-case basis, according to the specific goals of the Pillar, by means of targeted measures tailored to the relevant area of reference.

## Pillar

### Prevention Pillar



This Pillar covers various fields, from primary prevention based on wide-ranging awareness-raising and communication to education projects targeting primarily young people, and training programmes for the front-line staff providing assistance to the women victims of male violence. The relevant actions are developed in different albeit complementary directions.

### Protection and Support Pillar



This dimension most directly concerns women victims of violence and children who witness violence and its main objective is to define a systemic framework of interventions aimed at encouraging women to ask for help, and then supporting women on pathways out of violence and towards empowerment and financial, work and housing independence.

### Prosecute and Punish Pillar



This Pillar aims to strengthen the conditions required to ensure that the criminal justice system can act quickly and effectively against the male perpetrators of violence against women, in a manner consistently respectful of the victims' rights. It supports coordination between the institutions involved in the legal process and encourages the adoption of practices and operational protocols in accordance with the Istanbul Convention.

### Assistance and Promotion Pillar



Provides for interventions capable of strengthening the governance of the Plan, fostering direction and coordination by the DPO and the integration of the actors responsible for implementing actions aimed at preventing and combating violence against women, at different levels.

## 1. Prevention Pillar

It is widely acknowledged that prevention is one of the core elements – if not the most important – of the policies for combating violence against women. Despite Italy's very advanced legislation on the matter, violence continues to be widespread, also among the younger generations, taking on new forms thanks to new communication technologies.

The 2025-2027 Plan will therefore continue to invest in the Prevention Pillar, providing for integration with policies for gender equality and women's empowerment, as a fundamental lever for ensuring that women can live free from violence.

The Priorities of this Pillar are associated with systemic and integrated prevention, broken down into primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, and training. Primary prevention consists of awareness-raising and communication actions, and educational projects, aimed at preventing gender-based violence by combating gender stereotypes, promoting a culture of respect between men and women, and stigmatising violence against women, especially with regard to prevailing social models. The effectiveness of these interventions can be maximised by involving the various local actors, also through co-design actions.

All central government departments are committed to undertaking prevention actions, with the significant engagement of the social and economic partners and the regions. Primary prevention mainly targets young people (schools, universities, sports settings), but the entire population should also be taken into account, through the implementation of specific actions aimed at different sectors of society. Regarding young people, prevention actions can be undertaken both directly, i.e. through operators specialised in violence against women, and indirectly, i.e. through cultural activities aimed at presenting male-female relationship models based on respect and social development.

Secondary prevention is undertaken through interventions in specific areas and environments most at risk of engendering male violence against women or where violence is more widespread.

Tertiary prevention interventions focus on preventing repeat offences by male perpetrators, or by men who are likely to become perpetrators, or on minors who have passively witnessed episodes of male violence against women or femicide.

At the same time, training programmes for operators and educational staff have become a fundamental component of the interventions undertaken at all stages of the process of combating male violence against women, to ensure the overall effectiveness of the pathways out of violence and towards reintegration.

All the actors involved, whether institutional, third sector or social partners, represented in the Observatory on Violence, have acknowledged that training is key to ensuring the effectiveness of the interventions. Acting on this recognition, and in implementation of the 2021-2023 Plan, the Technical and Scientific Committee of the Observatory was tasked with preparing a White Paper on Training, which examines the target areas and audiences of each training action. The White Paper was published in November 2024, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and will serve as the basis for the national training guidelines provided for in Article 6 of Law No. 168/2023. Specialisation is a prerequisite for guaranteeing the effectiveness of the actions, and competence is at the core of the entire system of protection for women. The twofold goal of the Prevention Pillar can therefore be achieved through the following Priorities:

## Prevention Pillar

**Priority 1.1** Raising awareness among the public, and in the educational system in general, about the structural roots, causes and consequences of male violence against women and working to break up the stereotypes that underpin the violence.

**Priority 1.2** Engaging the private sector (through the social media, web platforms, mass media) in the struggle against the online spread of stereotypes and sexism, violent attitudes by men towards women and preventing any kind of online behaviour offensive to the dignity of women, also in relation to cyberviolence and the illegal dissemination of sexually explicit images or videos.

**Priority 1.3** Promoting empowerment, financial independence, a gender-based approach in labour policies, to help all women and as a tool for preventing and combating male economic violence and harassment at the workplace.



## Prevention Pillar

**Priority 1.4** Helping women move out of violence and combating violence against women victims of multiple discrimination, migrant women, asylum seekers and refugees, disabled and elderly women, in those settings where they are most at risk.

**Priority 1.5** Strengthening tertiary prevention actions to combat repeat offending by the male perpetrators of violence against women.

**Priority 1.6** Investing in strengthening the professional skills, also through training programmes, of public and private sector operators who interact with women and children in the prevention, support and reintegration pathways.

**Priority 1.7** Working to implement the relevant regulations.

Based on the priorities outlined above, the following areas of intervention and related measures have been identified and are described below.

**Priority 1.1** Raising awareness among the public, and in the educational system in general, about the structural roots, causes and consequences of male violence against women and working to break up the stereotypes that underpin the violence.

This Priority, as part of primary prevention and staff training actions, includes information and awareness-raising measures, since primary prevention refers to a set of actions aimed at reducing the likelihood of developing a behaviour or phenomenon at social level, targeting the population as a whole and not persons at risk, while taking into account the specific target groups towards which action should be taken. Therefore, information and awareness-raising contribute to the achievement of the general objective, based on the following actions:

- specific targeting of interventions and campaigns for planning more effective awareness-raising actions reaching out to specific target groups. Interventions are therefore targeted and undertaken using language, tools and messages appropriate to the target audience. Various actors involved in combating male violence against women have highlighted how important it is to identify new models and new specific content, tailored to the target

audience, to ensure that information activities are appropriate and effective, in relation to the social groups being targeted. Another priority is the promotion of activities aimed at young people, educating them about respect and raising awareness of violence against women, including violent behaviour online (e.g. online teen dating violence). The aim is also to explore relationship models and prevent minors who have witnessed episodes of violence from developing potentially violent behaviour.

- Specific training for public administration staff, which the Department of Public Administration is implementing on a continuous and systematic basis, through online training courses available on the “Riforma-Mentis – Let’s build a new culture against harassment at work” Syllabus platform, to raise awareness in the public sector on issues relating to respect for diversity, the culture of non-violence and the fight against stereotypes.
- Awareness raising campaigns, also aimed at families, to break up and overcome gender-based stereotypes, according to an approach respectful of diversity.
- Awareness raising campaigns about the free national emergency 1522 helpline service, as well as the dedicated ad poster, in schools and universities, to increase awareness among young people about the specific nature of violence against women and the regulatory instruments available.
- Information, communication and support campaigns on violence against women.
- Awareness raising campaigns targeting men, to promote awareness and encourage the adoption of respectful and non-violent behaviour.
- Use of tools that make the content of the campaigns accessible to women with specific disabilities, such as sign language, Braille or simplified messages for women with intellectual disabilities.
- Sharing a specific document for systemic prevention actions, identifying the most vulnerable groups, such as elderly and migrant women.

At the same time, it is crucial to promote continuous lifelong training on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, using the resources allocated for this purpose in the 2024 budget law, in accordance with Law No. 168 of 2023.

To carry out effective actions targeting the identified groups, it is essential to dynamically define the physical or virtual places where the interventions can be carried out and for meeting the target audience:

1. Schools, working with teaching staff and students on prevention, through the analysis and in-depth research into gender relations, the concept of violence and its various forms, and cultural and family stereotypes.

2. Universities, as places of education, research and work that operate on multiple levels and in different fields, which can become key settings for combating gender-based, domestic and sexual violence and, at the same time, for promoting virtuous models.
3. Venues where people socialize, meet up and take care of themselves, such as sports venues, where general prevention activities can be carried out, together with actions for preventing violence against vulnerable women.
4. Workplaces, which can provide great opportunities for women for self-expression and self-determination, and where women can develop and showcase their skills and related capabilities, to prevent all forms of discrimination, violence and harassment and combat prejudice and stereotypes.
5. The world of media, which should develop actions to monitor the sentiment aroused by incidents of male violence against women and provide training on the language used by media professionals.
6. The cultural and entertainment industry, which should work to promote a change in the values, models and messages it disseminates.
7. Civil society, by promoting awareness-raising and information campaigns that can positively influence mainstream cultural and educational models and effectively inform people about the available services and related emergencies. These campaigns must also be sufficiently accessible to the most vulnerable women.

**Priority 1.2** Engaging the private sector (through the social media, web platforms, mass media) in the struggle against the online spread of stereotypes and sexism, violent attitudes by men towards women and preventing any kind of online behaviour offensive to the dignity of women, also in relation to cyberviolence and the illegal dissemination of sexually explicit images or videos.

The media, online platforms, and social networks play an increasingly central role in the daily lives of most people. In recent years, there has been a growing spread of the online exchange of intimate images among both young people and adults, leading to highly risky behaviours. This has highlighted the urgency of introducing dedicated information campaigns, as a matter of priority, to inform the public about the consequences of sharing explicit images on social media. Primary prevention, aimed at younger users, and secondary prevention, to identify the persons at risk and use every available tool to raise awareness and control growing phenomena such as cyberbullying, online body-shaming and the illegal dissemination of sexually explicit images or videos.

The Istat survey on social media has shown how important it has become to monitor the online sentiment on violence against women, through an analysis of

the digital language, to determine whether the emotional tone used in responding to messages containing expressions or images of violence against women is positive, negative or neutral, and to identify effective tools and methods for intervention.

Structural measures should therefore be developed to introduce comprehensive and systematic education programs against gender stereotypes, promoting, instead, emotional awareness and respect.

**Priority 1.3** Promoting empowerment, financial independence, a gender-based approach in labour policies, to help all women and as a tool for preventing and combating male economic violence and harassment at the workplace.

Female empowerment is a multidimensional process that increases self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-determination and tends to (re)build one's identity towards achieving greater independence and opposing the economic violence perpetrated by men, through control of economic resources and a subtle process of undercutting the importance of women's work in the family and workplace.

Empowerment is at the core of the concepts of equality, equity and women's emancipation and is a powerful tool for combating gender discrimination, being closely linked to the assertiveness displayed by women in pursuing their goals, consciously building up trust in their potential to achieve personal and professional fulfilment. To kickstart and consolidate this process, it is crucial to raise awareness among men, at present and in the future, about the value of female resources and the importance of professional identity in shaping personal identity, specifically for women. It is therefore a matter of priority to develop economic and financial education programmes, also by disseminating a handbook written in simple but accurate language.

Specific focus should also be placed on harassment in the workplace, taking into account Law No. 4 of 15 January 2021, ratifying ILO Convention No. 190, in order to raise awareness among the public of this violent behaviour towards women.

**Priority 1.4** Helping women move out of violence and combating violence against women victims of multiple discrimination, migrant women, asylum seekers and refugees, disabled and elderly women, in those settings where they are most at risk.

Women who find themselves in difficult circumstances and also have to suffer male violence are victims of multiple discrimination. They include physically and psychologically fragile women, elderly and/or disabled women, women who are not independent and women who have become vulnerable due to their circumstances, such as migrant women and the victims of substance addictions. Due to the immense diversity of the category, the relevant information and communication projects should be targeted, accessible and tailored to specific skills and types of intervention.

Migrant women, asylum seekers and refugees are particularly exposed to violence before, during and after their journey, although specific differences may exist in relation to their status under current national, European (Council of Europe and European Union) and international (UN system, UNHCR) laws.

As highlighted in the White Paper on Training, which devotes significant attention to this category of victimisation, the actions to be implemented should target both the different contexts in which women may find themselves and the temporary conditions that may lead to discrimination, while also addressing the vulnerabilities that place them at risk of violence. In this context, female genital mutilation (FGM) is a serious violation of fundamental rights that affects girls and women globally. However, this harmful practice remains largely invisible and often hidden, difficult to recognise both by society in general and by those who, in various fields, may come into contact with women who are at risk or the victims of FGM. These include schools, social and health services, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, anti-violence centres and local committees for the recognition of international protection. The Department for Equal Opportunities is legally entrusted with the coordination of activities aimed at preventing and assisting victims of FGM, as well as at promoting the eradication of such practices. Drug addiction increases the vulnerability of women who use and abuse substances, placing them at heightened risk of exploitation and various forms of violence. This violence is not only experienced but is often tolerated by the women themselves due to their dependence on drugs, which contributes to the objectification of women and a potential loss of identity.

Systemic actions addressing women who are victims of multiple discrimination should focus on strengthening the coordination and integration of the policies set out herein with the actions contained in the Action Plan against Trafficking and Serious Exploitation of Human Beings.

**Priority 1.5 Strengthening tertiary prevention actions to combat repeat offending by the male perpetrators of violence against women.**

The Istanbul Convention, which has a comprehensive approach to gender-based violence and also includes programmes for the rehabilitation of male perpetrators of violence, states that the protection of women, and consequently the prevention of gender-based violence, should be implemented through measures aimed at combating recidivism and, above all, through re-education of the perpetrators, but also, more generally, through actions that bring about a cultural change in relation to dominant models of masculinity.

Law No. 69 of 19 July 2019 (known as the “Red Code Law”) has introduced the possibility for convicted perpetrators of violence to receive significantly reduced sentences if they agree to participate in rehabilitation programmes.

Law No. 168 of 2023 added a further requirement, stipulating that, in order to be eligible for a reduced sentence, the offender must successfully complete a rehabilitation programme, carried out in collaboration with the UEPE (Office for the Enforcement of Non-Custodial Sentences), a body for supervising sentence enforcement. Under Article 18 of this law, an inter-departmental decree is required to determine the criteria and procedures and adopt the guidelines for accrediting entities or associations authorised to provide rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators of violence against women and domestic violence.

The attempt to combat recidivism through rehabilitation programmes is understood as a tertiary prevention measure, identifying specific actions aimed at resolving the problems that have hitherto fuelled a certain degree of mistrust towards rehabilitation programmes. It is therefore necessary to plan communication actions targeting at-risk settings, to prevent the perpetuation of stereotypes and prejudices against women, together with interventions aimed at minors who are victims of witnessed violence, to ostracise the paradigm whereby “those who have been victims of violence become violent themselves”. There should also be a specific focus on violence perpetrated by minors.

**Priority 1.6 Investing in strengthening the professional skills, also through training programmes, of public and private sector operators who interact with women and children in the prevention, support and reintegration pathways.**

All the actors involved in the preparatory meetings for the Plan expressed the need for interventions capable of increasing the quality and quantity of the skills and knowledge of front-line professionals who, in various capacities and at

different stages of the process, serve as primary public contacts for women victims of violence and any minors involved. They also expressed a strong need for specialised interventions regarding male violence against women and domestic violence. In this regard, there should be a two-pronged approach, one focusing on the study programmes leading to specific professional qualifications (degree courses, secondary schools, vocational training) and the other on specialisation and refresher programmes for the front-line staff providing primary contact services for women victims of violence.

The key points of training activities relative to this priority should be a multidisciplinary approach, welcoming and listening skills, the ability to recognise signs of violence even if they are not explicitly stated, and the effects of violence on minors. To this end, and based on the said White Paper on training, guidelines will be defined, in accordance with Law 168/2023, to promote adequate, non-sexist and uniform training for supporting the women victims of violence, including women with disabilities, regarding:

- professionals trained to respond to cases of violence against women (e.g. physicians, obstetricians, social workers and social-health psychologists, lawyers, etc.), also with a view to preventing secondary victimisation. Training guidelines will be included in the relevant university courses, as well as in all basic university education;
- teaching staff, at all schools, in relation to combating stereotypes and preventing violence against women;
- journalists specialising in gender-related reporting, concerning both gender stereotypes and cases of violence against women;
- front-line professionals in contact with pregnant women, to increase their ability to recognise signs of violence, communicate with women and activate local networks;
- criminal, civil and juvenile judges;
- court-appointed experts (so-called CTUs).

Furthermore, the following are also required:

- events for combating stereotypes at all levels through training;
- events and campaigns to overcome gender stereotypes by disseminating positive female role models (the “*Italia delle donne*” project aimed at identifying prominent female figures who have made great contributions to their local communities or the country as a whole).

In any case, the training guidelines referred to in Article 6 of Law 168/2023, which should be developed strictly in accordance with the said White Paper on Training,

will provide the framework for all training initiatives implemented by the institutions, to ensure compliance with uniform standards, sharing targets and objectives with each target category. Moreover, there is also a need for joint training specifically tailored to the different professions involved in proceedings before the judicial authorities.

Regarding civil servants, a series of actions are planned in the relevant contexts, to promote and disseminate the directive on “recognising, preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women”, adopted on 19 December 2023 by the Minister for Public Administration, to promote the well-being of civil servants, by fostering a positive working environment, where the principles of equal opportunities are respected, and providing civil servants with the necessary tools to prevent, combat and eliminate violence against women.

In its latest report, GREVIO, besides emphasising the critical importance of legal action in custody situations involving case of violence, suggests introducing specific training for criminal, civil and juvenile judges. Therefore, as part of this priority, it is also necessary to consider the introduction of psychological counselling and support tools to assist legal practitioners in assessing the risk posed by perpetrators of violence, which should also be designed to help identify treatment pathways and restrictive measures for effectively minimising risk by engaging competent and adequately trained professionals.

The *Scuola Superiore della Magistratura* (Judicial Training School) offers a solid training programme on this subject every year, on a permanent and decentralised basis, which training should be made compulsory for all judges.

It is also crucial to establish close cooperation with the *Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura* (High Council of the Judiciary), to collect information within the criminal law system, based on questionnaires, and analyse current good practices, for their standardisation across the country.

### **Priority 1.7 Working to implement the relevant regulations.**

The latest regulatory measures have strengthened victim protection measures, for prevention purposes, also addressing the issues of timeliness and speed in the collection of information from the victims of the crime. This is also consistent with the provisions of EU Directive 2024/1385, currently being transposed into Italian law, which, for the first time, provides a general legal Europe-wide framework on combating violence against women. The Directive provides that there should be a special focus on combating the AI manipulation of images of women and minors, also in terms of sanctions.

Given the complex regulatory framework in Italy, many actors believe it would be appropriate to analyse, systematise and simplify all the applicable legislation on the matter, to more easily identify the areas that still present critical issues and provide an easy-to-use regulatory tool to support women victims of violence, also in terms of the information and awareness-raising actions that are central to this Plan.

## 2. Protection and Support Pillar

The areas covered by this Pillar are based on the guidelines set out in Chapter IV of the Istanbul Convention, supplemented and enhanced by the experiences and results emerging from discussions with central and regional governments, local authorities, organisations, associations, social partners and employers. The aim of this Pillar is to provide the necessary tools to welcome women who are victims of male violence and support them, together with any minors who witness domestic violence, on the pathway out of violence. The crucial phase in this pathway is the initial stage, in which women must come realise that being a victim is not a normal condition and therefore start considering their own safety, and that of any minors witnessing the abuse, as a priority. All the operators agree that the first occurrence of abuse is when women should be introduced to the pathway for helping them out of violence. This Pillar has a very important role regarding material and immaterial infrastructure investments, to guarantee the availability of care, support the process of recovery and personal rebuilding, and, through a process of empowerment, restore the women's full dignity and capacity of self-determination. Essential aspects of protection and support concern the Pillar's Priorities, according to a seamless process that begins when a woman acknowledges the abuse she is suffering and ends when she is able to quit the support system, once she becomes independent and reintegrates into society.

This Pillar should include two cross-cutting objectives, also referred to during the round tables held to discuss the Plan, that can inspire the actions undertaken, namely, standardising and harmonising the tools and pathways available to women, also based on the many good practices built up at national level, and promoting the full implementation of the relevant legislation, which also requires adequate monitoring.

### Protection and Support Pillar



**Priority 2.1** Taking care of the women victims of violence and minors victims of witnessed violence through integrated pathways, based on support and reintegration, in emergency settings and later on.



**Priority 2.2** Implementing empowerment pathways for gaining economic, financial, work and housing independence.



## Protection and Support Pillar

- ◀ **Priority 2.3** Monitoring and improving the “*Pathways for women victims of violence*”: guidelines for the local health authorities and hospitals on providing emergency rescue and assistance services.
- ◀ **Priority 2.4** Supporting the free nationwide emergency 1522 helpline service and implementing collaboration mechanisms between the helpline, anti-violence centres, shelters, local networks, law enforcement and legal systems.
- ◀ **Priority 2.5** Protecting and providing social and mental health support to minors victims of witnessed violence.
- ◀ **Priority 2.6** Implementing solutions for guaranteeing equal access to the protection and support services for migrant women, female asylum seekers and refugees and elderly and disabled women.

**Priority 2.1** Taking care of the women victims of violence and minors victims of witnessed violence through integrated pathways based on support and reintegration, in emergency settings and later on.

The services and organisations charged with taking care of women victims of violence and any minors involved should adopt a victim-centred approach, to ensure the effectiveness of the protection, support and moving out of violence process. This centrality requires the sharing of a common vision, language, operational models, and procedures integrating different perspectives while preserving the specific roles and responsibilities of each actor all united by a common goal: to accompany women and children through the emergency phase and help them build autonomous lives free from violence.

It is therefore essential to adopt a tailored, empathetic and non-judgmental approach, which can acknowledge and build on the past experiences and skills of women victims, to help them make informed choices and follow appropriate pathways.

The local networks can play an important role in this kind of approach, because they are at the front line of response for these women and because they can develop comprehensive interventions in different directions, thanks to their widespread organisation.

These close-knit local networks operate in partnership with the local authorities, and in accordance with the regional guidelines, with the active engagement of public and private intermediaries.

In this context, anti-violence centres and shelters can play a central role but they need to be further strengthened in order to respond to the emerging needs. The anti-violence centres and shelters, and the various local services that contribute to taking care of the women and any children involved, should operate in a competent and knowledgeable manner and ensure the effective application and sharing of their working methods, despite their diversity of roles, also on the basis of joint planning processes. Moreover, an essential feature of this priority area is to safeguard the gender-based approach and maintain a balance between the formal approach of each network and a standardised set of common practices. Emergency management, the rescue and recovery of the individual women and planning the pathway towards rebuilding their lives, which also involves achieving economic and housing independence, are steps that require the engagement of all those who play a decisive role.

It is therefore a question of bringing together the experiences and good practices of established organisations that deal with violence and have developed an effective methodology over time, with more recent specialised experience, which must in any case undertake adequate specialist training courses based on the guidelines contained in the White Paper on Training.

To meet these needs and based on the experience built up by anti-violence centres and shelters, it is considered appropriate to carry out an analysis of the minimum operating costs of these facilities, with a view to improving their quality standards, also in light of the requirements set out in the Understanding of 14 September 2022.

At the same time, efforts to support the operation of the anti-violence centres and shelters will continue, engaging both the central government and local authorities, with a view to further extending their services across the country.

### **Priority 2.2 Implementing empowerment pathways for gaining economic, financial, work and housing independence.**

The issue of economic, financial and occupational empowerment is key to both the emergent awareness and understanding of abuse and moving women out of violence and towards independence. In this context, it is essential to highlight the emergent awareness of economic violence, which is a tool for maintaining dependency, reinforced by patriarchal stereotypes, as one of the elements

underpinning the pathological relationship between victim and male perpetrator. Therefore, empowerment should become a fundamental pillar in the process of social and work integration and reintegration, as well as housing independence. Which is why uniform interventions should be promoted across the country. The focus on economic and financial empowerment can accelerate the process of inclusion of women moving out of violence, who wish to regain control of their lives and reclaim their social and professional space, by including women on the pathway out of violence in the active nationwide labour policies (e.g. the Workers' Employability Guarantee Programme, National Youth Programme, Women and Work Programme). At the same time, it is crucial to assess prioritising early childhood education services for the children of women on the pathway out of violence or promoting financial support programmes allowing access to such services in areas without adequate public provision.

Importantly, financial and income support measures such as "Freedom of income", "Micro-credit of Income", the extension of social safety nets (*Naspi*), and parental leave for women victims of violence are considered by stakeholders as vital instruments, especially in the first stages of the reintegration process. This requires information and communication campaigns targeting women, also in the workplace and through the anti-violence networks, on the opportunities offered by such financial instruments.

Aligning vocational training initiatives with the main productive sectors of the local area where the intervention is implemented has been recognized as a crucial step by those working to promote women's economic independence. A significant factor is the state of the social infrastructure in our country and the profound regional differences that have emerged. Therefore, the social infrastructure should be redefined and implemented to help free women from the burden of non-remunerative care work, which is an obstacle to their full professional and economic fulfilment, and to strengthen a predominantly female-centric employment sector.

### **Priority 2.3 Monitoring and improving the "Pathways for women victims of violence": guidelines for the local health authorities and hospitals on providing emergency rescue and assistance services.**

The national guidelines for healthcare providers and hospitals on emergency and socio-healthcare for women victims of violence were issued on 24 November 2017 by Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers, and published in the Official Journal of the Italian Republic on 30 January 2018, to provide a dedicated pathway for women who have suffered violence, and their children who have

witnessed or been exposed to violence and abuse, on admission to A&E departments.

The importance of the healthcare system in implementing prevention and intervention strategies tackling violence against women has been recognised and the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines violence against women also as a serious public health issue and one of the main risk factors for morbidity and premature mortality of women and girls.

To ensure the uniform application of the National Guidelines, it is crucial to promote and strengthen monitoring by the health authorities charged with applying the guidelines. Furthermore, it might be necessary to envisage proposals for reviewing and integrating the guidelines so that they can be adapted to recently emerging social issues, including the use and effects of psychoactive drugs in cases of drug-facilitated sexual assault.

The White Paper on Training recognises the importance of the initial impact of admission to A&E and healthcare facilities and defines the procedure that healthcare professionals and law enforcement agencies should follow when receiving victims and accompanying minors, specifying the tools, measures and procedures to be applied during the different stages of moving out of violence. Therefore, the White Paper sets out guidelines for actions aimed at bringing about significant cultural change, as well as in the professional sphere.

#### **Priority 2.4 Supporting the free nationwide emergency 1522 helpline service and implementing collaboration mechanisms between the helpline, anti-violence centres, shelters, local networks, law enforcement and legal systems.**

The effectiveness of the 1522 helpline service, especially in emergencies, depends on the availability of clear information and procedures, as well as on the ability to promptly refer women seeking help, with or without children, to competent nearby front-line services capable of providing immediate assistance anywhere in the country. The connection with local networks and law enforcement agencies is crucial to ensure the ultimate effectiveness of the emergency interventions, and making available the instruments that can enable timely intervention is a priority.

It has been highlighted in the “Final document of the Working Group on Violence against Women with Disabilities” that action is needed to make the helpline service easily and fully accessible to women with disabilities. The document proposes expanding the ways in which the 1522 service can be used to allow easier access, not only through written communication but also through sign language video calls or augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) signs.

**Priority 2.5** Protecting and providing social and mental health support to minors victims of witnessed violence.

A key aspect of the Istanbul Convention is the importance of considering the needs of minors who witness, or are exposed to, violence and abuse (exposure to violence), when defining policies to combat violence against women, by providing dedicated support pathways and taking the best interests of the child into account. Although the Istanbul Convention explicitly includes minors (under the age of 18) in the definition of “women”, it is worth mentioning that the specific and additional vulnerabilities of this population group, similar to those of persons with disabilities, require a specific and targeted response during the planning process, especially regarding adolescents, as a critical phase both in terms of the risk of violence and the need for support. Important steps in developing more effective strategies are analysing the risk factors involved, conducting in-depth studies to improve the care management of minors, and coordinating response systems for women with those for minors who have survived violence. Effective integration of the social services, health services and anti-violence centres is therefore crucial when receiving mothers with minor children for treatment and care.

In this context, there should be a special focus on protecting and supporting the orphans of femicide, to further improve the care provided by the facilities.

**Priority 2.6** Implementing solutions for guaranteeing equal access to the protection and support services for migrant women, female asylum seekers and refugees and elderly and disabled women.

To overcome the cultural and linguistic barriers that limit access to services, a crucial provision should be to ensure the stable presence of linguistic and cultural mediators specialised in addressing gender-based violence issues at the care-providing facilities. Mapping the services, establishing a link between the services and the SIOSS (Unified Information System for Social Services) and identifying the good practices developed in relation to the services for migrant and refugee women and girls, to be replicated on a large scale, is essential to promote awareness of existing services and of the referral and access mechanism.

Likewise, strengthening multilingual information campaigns that take into account the different cultural backgrounds of migrant and refugee women and girls and aim to promote awareness and access to services responding to gender-based violence, including the free nationwide emergency 1522 helpline service, should be prioritised, with a specific focus on young women.

An across-the-board multidisciplinary and intercultural approach is needed, so as not to exclude foreign women from the protection and support opportunities offered by the local networks. Moreover, also crucial is facilitating an understanding of the phenomenon of violence against women within a cultural and social context that differs from the generally accepted context, but which is capable of identifying the power and control disparities and the domination mechanisms underlying this type of crime. Recruiting and training professionals capable of grasping and understanding different cultural orientations is essential in developing these actions.

In practice, all interventions should therefore be coordinated and integrated with the National Action Plan against Trafficking and Serious Exploitation, to effectively address the needs and specificities of women, most of whom are foreign or second-generation, by strengthening the tools for combating violence and multiple discrimination.

Requests for help from women victims of violence aged 65+ are on the rise. These are fragile women, often alone and dependent on their husbands or children. This phenomenon, however, has not yet fully emerged, since older women find it more difficult to report abuse for many reasons, such as their inability to ask for help due to disability or isolation, the fear of being disowned by their family, the need to be cared for by their partner, who is often the only caregiver. These women come from a generation imbued with a very traditional mindset concerning gender roles, which assigned men as providers and women as caregivers. Furthermore, elderly women can find it particularly difficult and tiring to leave their homes for a protected facility, where they will have to live with strangers.

Violence against women with disabilities is both insidious and frequent; moreover, they are more often victims of sexual violence, face greater challenges in being believed, and have fewer resources and tools available to protect themselves.

These women require *ad hoc* planning and the implementation of dedicated measures that can take these specificities into account. In these cases, care management should be provided by operators with specific skills and professionals with experience built up in contexts where relationships are forged and intervention tools are implemented on the basis of the relevant needs.

This priority also highlights the need to facilitate access to services such as the 1522 helpline and the anti-violence centres and shelters, and the inclusivity of the reception, protection and safeguarding tools.

Regarding reception at victim protection and support facilities, there should be a sharper focus on women with disabled children and women over the age of 65, who, as mentioned above, already find themselves in difficult circumstances, as a vulnerable target group to be analysed and adequately cared for. There should be a similar focus on the reception of foreign women and women with addictions, conditions that require particularly complex care management, especially if children are also involved.

### 3. Prosecute and Punish Pillar

Women who suffer violence have the right to feel protected and to obtain justice quickly and efficiently, which requires the commitment of the entire criminal justice system.

The 2021-2023 Plan had already expressed the need to introduce measures to protect women from the perpetrators of violence, to prevent, recognise and manage the risk of repeated violent behaviour, and to implement actions aimed at guaranteeing the rights of victims at the various stages of criminal and civil proceedings, as well as in the juvenile justice system, with particular attention to ensuring the speed of proceedings.

This Pillar, therefore, requires prompt activity by the institutions responsible for protecting the victims of violence, as soon as possible after the violence has been reported. Accordingly, regulatory measures have been implemented in recent years to ensure the safety of victims, preventing the recurrence of violence and further incidents that could put women's lives and health at risk. Time is of the essence when tackling the phenomenon of violence against women.

The most recent legislative measures, starting with Law 168 of 24 November 2023, have mainly focused on the timeliness and speed of collecting information, with the legislator focusing in particular on:

- the possibility for the Public Prosecutor to revoke the assignment of a case of gender-based violence if the judge fails to comply with the requirement to gather information from the victim within three days;
- the monitoring function assigned to the Office of the General Prosecutor at the Court of Appeal, which shall receive data, on a quarterly basis, from the relevant public prosecutor's office concerning compliance with the deadline for gathering information from the victim and send a half-yearly (at least) report to the General Prosecutor's Office at the Court of Cassation;
- changes to hearing schedules and the handling of trials;
- setting a time limit for the public prosecutor to formulate a request for interim measures.
- Regarding victim safety and prevention, the possibility of extending police warning measures to all forms of violence against women, whether attempted or perpetrated, including acts of coercion through force or threats, aggravated threats, stalking, distribution of sexually explicit images, trespassing, damage to property, and so-called "early-warning crimes", with the aim of anticipating the measures as far as possible and preventing the violence from spiralling.

Moreover, penalties may be increased by up to one third in the case of offenders who had already received a police warning, even in the case of a different victim.

The aim of the legislator was to place domestic violence and gender-based violence on a par with the most dangerous offences that are hard to combat, such as organised crime, also due to the complex nature of the investigations and the difficulty of understanding the symptoms of malaise that can lead to violent actions.

Regarding protection and support needs, there is a requirement to inform the victim of the nearby anti-violence centres, thus emphasising the importance of collaboration among the local networks, implementing synergies with the institutions and their local branches.

Lastly, it should be mentioned how civil and criminal proceedings intersect and how the civil courts have the authority to immediately implement safety measures for minors, drawing on information sourced from both the civil proceedings and the personality profiles of the person against whom there has been an allegation of violence. The use of the term “allegation” is not accidental: it means that proof is not required to trigger the summary assessment aimed at protecting the family context. This allows the judge - who is not responsible for determining the criminal liability of the alleged perpetrator - to intervene in order to ensure the safety of minors and to regulate the relationship with the other party. Operationally speaking, the law enforcement agencies have developed specific applications for the real-time collection and sharing of information, during investigations, such as:

- the inter-force application called “Scudo”, for reconstructing and linking the various incidents involving alleged perpetrators and victims, as well as monitoring emergency response activities at national level, and for verifying useful information gathered in relation to previous interventions by the police at the same address, so as to be able to plan the operations and support for victims in a more tailored way;
- the Youpol application, which is free to download and use, and allows women victims of violence to send reports, anonymously or otherwise, with the option of attaching videos, audio files, images and text.
- These are cutting-edge tools developed and implemented with the aim of effectively protecting women victims of violence and monitoring male perpetrators.

## Prosecute and Punish Pillar

While recognising the importance and effectiveness of these measures, the work for protecting women victims of violence and anticipating incidents that could lead to violence as quickly as possible must be carried out according to the following priorities:

**Priority 3.1** Ensuring common procedures and instruments for protecting the women victims of violence, allowing the effective and speedy assessment and management of the risk of lethality, reiteration and repeating the abuse, also by strengthening collaboration among all the institutional stakeholders involved.

**Priority 3.2** Improving the effective application by the courts of interim measures and the conditional suspension of sentences.

**Priority 3.3** Defining the guidelines for analysing and monitoring, in quantitative and qualitative terms, the interventions relative to programmes for male perpetrators of violence.

**Priority 3.1** Ensuring common procedures and instruments for protecting the women victims of violence, allowing the effective and speedy assessment and management of the risk of lethality, reiteration and repeating the abuse, also by strengthening collaboration among all the institutional stakeholders involved.

Although the regulatory framework in our country is gradually refining the measures regarding male violence against women and the prevention of femicide, several critical issues persist in the practical application of the regulations. It is therefore crucial to understand how laws are implemented and to identify areas for improvement, to ensure greater effectiveness.

It is also essential to focus on areas with greater difficulties, particularly when dealing with incidents of violence or femicide, bearing in mind that such crimes arise from complex relational dynamics, and to identify effective measures for recognising domestic violence. This makes it difficult for the authorities to promptly anticipate homicidal intentions and adequately assess the danger of certain family situations.

One of the main obstacles is the lack of knowledge and difficult interaction between existing support networks.

Although some good practices have been implemented locally, they are not always well known or adequately publicised. It would be useful to raise public awareness of these resources, which can provide guidance on how to identify and when to report certain red flags predicting abuse.

Communication and awareness-raising are therefore vital. Moreover, successful projects should be disseminated to encourage local areas to adopt consistent methods and approaches, to ensure a more coordinated and uniform response throughout the country.

### **Priority 3.2 Improving the effective application by the courts of interim measures and the conditional suspension of sentences.**

This priority stems from the need to effectively apply the existing legislation, in the face of continuous improvements to the regulatory framework.

The focus should be on the decision-making context of investigations and preliminary hearings, which are crucial moments when the criminal justice system first comes into contact with persons accused of abuse and violence. This is a particularly sensitive context, since the judiciary is required to supervise the investigations, decide on interim measures, where necessary, and assess the strength of the evidence against the suspect, in order to be able to decide whether or not to commit them for trial.

As anticipated in the section on the Prevention Pillar, Priority 1.6, GREVIO, in its latest report, suggests the introduction of *ad hoc* training programmes. In fact, judges dealing with cases of male violence against women should undertake compulsory training, given the fundamental role they play in preventing violence and avoiding its recurrence.

The focus should also be on treatment programmes for adults and minors in prisons.

The issues that have emerged, to date, suggest that the application of interim measures needs to be strengthened, also by carefully monitoring the use of electronic tags for the perpetrators of violence or related offences.

These devices are crucial for monitoring the measures, so it is essential for the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior work to ensure that they are effectively functioning, to minimise the possible risks from the failure to promptly notify a victim of restraining order breaches. It is also essential to cut the time required to issue the tags, to prevent the protective measures from being ineffective or unnecessarily delayed.

**Priority 3.3** Defining the guidelines for analysing and monitoring, in quantitative and qualitative terms, the interventions relative to programmes for male perpetrators of violence.

Interventions aimed at the perpetrators of violence should be focused on ensuring the safety of the victim, by means of timely and individual monitoring, including clinical monitoring, and the quality of services provided, thus pre-empting any claims that they are illegitimate.

The programmes for abusive men should therefore not be implemented solely for opportunistic reasons, for the purpose of reducing their sentence, but independently of the sentence, for genuine reasons, to ensure both the punishment of violent individuals and the possibility to undertake a transformative process of redemption, for the benefit of potential victims, the community at large and the individuals themselves. It is crucial that the perpetrators of violence no longer represent a danger when they come out of prison. To achieve this, the prison rehabilitation programmes must be tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of each perpetrator, applying methods and practices scientifically tested at national and international level, and based on clinical practice. To this end, the programmes must take into account the results of a structured violence assessment and management procedure.

In any case, it is essential that the programmes designed for the perpetrators of violence are carried out with the guarantee of total separation – in terms of their location, methods and operators – from the anti-violence centres, in accordance with the Istanbul Convention.

To ensure the quality and specialisation of the relevant services, it is essential to implement the decree of 22 January 2025 issued by the Minister of Justice and the Minister for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities, which, pursuant to Article 6 of the said Law 168 of 2023, has established the criteria and procedures for the accreditation of bodies or organisations providing rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators of violence against women and domestic violence, and the adoption of specific guidelines.

## 4. Assistance and Promotion Pillar

In agreement with the 2021-2023 Plan, the Assistance and Promotion Pillar provides support to the three other Pillars (Prevention, Protection and Support, and Prosecution and Punishment), primarily by monitoring and evaluating the Plan, to improve knowledge of the phenomenon, more effectively target interventions against male violence against women, and promote initiatives and policy tools dedicated to preventing and combating violence against women.

Assistance, therefore, is essential to consistently monitor the implementation of the Priorities, besides identifying the measures required to enhance the Plan's effectiveness and choosing the appropriate tools to strengthen the ability to analyse, interpret and manage the specificities of the phenomena, during the implementation process.

The matrix of this Pillar function has a twofold purpose: preparing the appropriate tools for studying trends within the phenomena addressed by the Plan, as well as the trends emerging at the social, cultural, national and international political levels, and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures underpinning the interventions. To this end, it is expedient to define the scope and nature of the activities implemented by the structure set up to support the political decision-making entity responsible for ensuring equal opportunities, i.e. the DPO.

A key aspect of the work of the DPO is the horizontal and vertical coordination of the Plan with the other public and private social organisations involved in the relevant processes, to define the content and methods of implementation of the measures.

In parallel with the implementation of both the interventions and the specific actions, and governance of the processes, the DPO is tasked with putting into place a system ensuring the continuous inflow of data and information, as a useful tool for analysing the various forms of violence against women and for monitoring the implemented measures and allocated resources in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

The two major areas of this Pillar are assisting the processes and promoting the relevant tools and results, which can be achieved through the following priorities.

Priority 4.1 Implementing the integrated information system: collecting and analysing data on the various forms of the phenomenon.

Priority 4.2 Implementing a nationwide horizontal and vertical monitoring and evaluation system for the interventions, policies, actions and resources.

Priority 4.3 Communication.

**Priority 4.1 Implementing the integrated information system: collecting and analysing data on the various forms of the phenomenon.**

Collaboration with Istat has enabled the Department for Equal Opportunities to access significant and essential data for the implementation of the previous Plan, through the gradual development of an integrated information system shared with the various stakeholders involved in the prevention and elimination of male violence against women.

The DPO will continue to rely on Istat to implement this Priority, for the purpose of monitoring the phenomenon of male violence against women, defining the appropriate tools for data collection, analysis and interpretation, and their reasoned dissemination.

The development of effective measures to combat the phenomenon and support women in their efforts to move out of violence requires identifying specific focus points that can provide a snapshot of the current situation, on the basis of *ad hoc* statistical tools integrating with regional information systems.

**Priority 4.2 Implementing a nationwide horizontal and vertical monitoring and evaluation system for the interventions, policies, actions and resources.**

In order to fully implement the 2025-2027 Plan, in all its aspects, it is essential to set up an advanced evaluation function capable of analysing the achievement of the institutional objectives, and related actions, in terms of their effectiveness and efficiency.

To this end, an essential activity is to monitor the expected results, processes/phases/activities, as well as the functions and competences assigned to the parties involved.

Regarding the ongoing and *ex post* monitoring and evaluation of policies aimed at combating male violence against women (also in relation to the individual Pillars, Priorities and measures), the objective remains that of verifying the progress and results of all the interventions introduced and, therefore, the achievement of the relevant policy objectives.

To this end, the Plan will be associated with a robust monitoring system built on a set of indicators for constantly measuring its progress, in terms of both action implementation (status of the procedures) and results (effectiveness and efficiency), also with a view to ensuring compliance with the principles of transparency and public accountability.

In particular, the DPO will ensure centralised and cross-cutting monitoring on a six-monthly basis, also within the Observatory, with the active engagement of the Regions, which are charged with implementing the Plan policies at the local level, using both the resources allocated on an annual basis and their own funds (regional and European), in order to provide a constantly updated picture of the interventions carried out nationwide.

Dedicated monitoring tools may be developed for this purpose.

#### **Priority 4.3 Communication of the Assistance and Promotion Pillar**

The thematic round tables responsible for drawing up the Plan have forcefully emphasised the importance of communication as a key factor in implementing the policies aimed at the prevention and combating of violence against women. In particular, they have highlighted the good practices and communication failures between the parties responsible for planning and implementing the measures. An effective measure to overcome these critical issues could be extending communication obligations to all the public and private organisations responsible for implementing the Plan.

## 5. International Cooperation

Like the 2021-2023 Plan, this Plan also includes a section dedicated to Italy's commitments in the field of Italian development cooperation in the international and domestic context, in both multilateral settings and bilateral relations with third countries.

Italian development cooperation activities in this area aim to create a favourable environment, in partner countries, for the empowerment of women's rights through interventions that can strengthen the relevant social, cultural and legal dimensions and reinforce the administrative capacities of local governments. Likewise, activities aimed at spurring the empowerment of women through actions for their inclusion in local educational and work contexts are also promoted.

The main objective, consistently with the previous plan, remains to strengthen Italy's commitment to combating male violence against women at the international level, through direct measures and institutional representation activities. Following is an overview of the reference measures at the core of the 2025-2027 intervention strategy:

- advancing the rights of women and the fight against all forms of discrimination and violence at international level, through the relevant multilateral forums (Human Rights Council and Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, European Union, Council of Europe, etc.) and in bilateral relations with other countries, as well as through development cooperation programmes;
- promoting female empowerment and the full participation of women in development processes and in the fight against all forms of violence, harassment, abuse and sexual exploitation against women and girls, especially with regard to harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation and early and forced marriages, through development cooperation and development and humanitarian assistance programmes for promoting gender equality;
- providing support to the humanitarian actors and communities affected by emergencies, on the basis of the Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action issued by the InterAgency Standing Committee of the United Nations, in coordinating, planning, implementing and monitoring essential actions for the prevention and mitigation of the risk of gender-based violence in all areas of humanitarian response;

- dedicating cross-cutting attention to gender equality and equal opportunity policies (gender mainstreaming) on the part of Italian Cooperation, including in all initiatives not specifically related to this sector, in accordance with the goals of the 2030 Agenda.



## PART IV

# The governance model



Policies to combat male violence against women touch on many aspects and cut across multiple levels of government, encompassing various areas of State responsibility, through the central government departments tasked with carrying out the functions grouped in “sectoral issues” (e.g. work, education, health, etc.), the Regions and the local authorities, i.e. all the entities on the front line of addressing gender-based violence issues. This Plan provides a unified strategic approach to achieving its goals and actions in the 2025-2027 period.

The governance system associated with the Plan should therefore adopt specific guidelines, in order to enable the parties involved to operate effectively and achieve concrete and significant results, based on the following principles:

- the roles and responsibilities of the actors involved in the Plan, and the relevant decision-making process, must be clearly defined, to facilitate intervention planning and implementation;
- the different sectors contributing to policy integration (protection and prevention, awareness raising, education and training, protection and empowerment, etc.) must work towards consistent goals;
- efforts must be focused on building and strengthening collaboration networks and partnerships between the actors engaged in combating male violence against women (local institutions, associations, non-profit organisations, social cooperatives, social and health services, schools, universities and training centres, etc.), to develop synergies and enhance the effectiveness of the interventions implemented.

There are many parties involved in the governance model, and their actions are largely interconnected.

To enable the full implementation of the guidelines, the governance system requires a broad and shared organisation, developed around the functions and tasks of the structures described below, to ensure its optimal operation:

- The body responsible for coordinating the institutional entities. This is the

political authority responsible for equal opportunities, operating through the DPO of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and tasked with furthering dialogue between the institutional actors and the public and third-sector organisations.

- The central government agencies and departments responsible for implementing “sectoral policies” (health, education, university education, employment, social issues, etc.), which participate in the Plan sharing and in the implementation of specific lines of action, under their exclusive responsibility, and which are in any case required to operate ordinary channels of communication with other institutional bodies, local and otherwise, especially regarding care and management models and standards, in the various settings in which the phenomenon occurs.
- The regional governments, in their dual role as policy planners for their region, in accordance with the Constitution, and as co-actors in the process of direction, planning and co-financing of the national and local strategic objectives, to ensure the coordinated deployment of the investments flowing into the regions, under the multiple nationwide socio-economic revival programmes, in which the regions are key players. The regions are also tasked with implementing systemic and direct actions to raise service standards across the board and rebalance regional differences, under their constitutional and concurrent powers.
- The provincial and local governments and metropolitan cities, including the local and provincial government associations (ANCI and UPI, respectively), are tasked with ensuring that the gender-based violence prevention and response policies are implemented in a comprehensive and cohesive manner, based on their powers in social policy-making and their geographical “proximity” to the situations most exposed to the risk of gender-based and other forms of violence. In particular, local governments play a strategic role in coordinating – as well as providing continuous updating and training services to – the entities and organisations working in the field of prevention and combating violence (law enforcement agencies, judiciary, professional associations, municipal services, education boards, etc.), financing many lines of action with their own resources.
- The national and local associations established to protect and support women victims of violence, locally or farther afield, are able, thanks also to consolidated networks, to raise awareness about the phenomenon, to make suggestions to the institutional actors about the need to adapt the regulatory and legal instruments for combating violence, and to implement interventions aimed at taking care of and providing support for the victims, to ensure a “comprehensive and multidisciplinary” response towards helping victims out of violence.

- The socio-economic partnerships between organisations, including at international level, for their role in promoting improvement in their respective sectors, working to identify general solutions, mediating towards the achievement of common and general goals in combating the phenomenon, and participating as observers in discussions on the effects of the intervention policies.

The previous 3-level governance structure of the Plan has been confirmed, which is also tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Plan, to achieve its objectives/Priorities. The three integrated levels are: 1) the national Steering Committee, with strategic policy-making functions; 2) the Observatory, with specialist technical functions; 3) local governance, with liaison functions between the central and local government levels and for coordinating the local networks addressing the issues covered by the Plan.

Article 1, paragraph 149, of Law No. 234 of 30 December 2021 (2022 Budget Law), amended Article 5 of Decree-Law No. 93 by inserting paragraph 2-bis and providing for a governance system consisting of an inter-departmental Steering Committee (a policy-making body) and an Observatory on violence against women and domestic violence.

Both bodies were established by decree of the pro tempore authority responsible for Equal Opportunities. The Steering Committee, with policy-making functions, was established by decree on 29 March 2022 and the Observatory by decree on 12 April 2022 (both published in the Official Journal on 13 May 2022).

The Observatory, in particular, is chaired by the President of the Council of Ministers, or the political authority responsible for equal opportunities, and consists of three bodies: the President, the Assembly and the Technical and Scientific Committee.

The Observatory performs monitoring, analysis, study and proposal functions, also for the purpose of developing and implementing the National Strategic Plan on violence against women and domestic violence. In 2023 and 2024, the Observatory Assembly met five times, in plenary session and four times in working groups, to prepare the new National Strategic Plan on male violence against women.

The bodies of the Observatory are:

- the President (President of the Council of Ministers or political authority responsible for equal opportunities);

- the Assembly, whose members are appointed by the President of the Council of Ministers or the political authority responsible for equal opportunities and by each political authority forming the inter-departmental Steering Committee, plus members designated to represent the local authorities, civil society organisations involved in preventing and combating violence against women, research bodies such as ISTAT and CNR, and social organisations;
- the Technical and Scientific Committee is composed of the Head of the DPO and a number of experts, including the coordinator, with proven high-level expertise in the areas of interest to the Observatory. Its task is to guide and plan the activities of the Observatory, providing support in terms of content, skills and knowledge.

The Observatory takes action in three distinct stages: firstly, in the Plan preparation, by conducting research and analysis work aimed at developing new proposals and priorities based on in-depth knowledge of the new needs and phenomena related to violence against women. Secondly, it has a monitoring role during the implementation of the Plan, regarding the interventions/actions against violence planned by the national and regional institutions. Finally, it has the power to promote analysis and research, study and documentation on the issues addressed in the Plan, to further the skills and knowledge of its contents.

The governance system ensures the full integration and coordination of regional policies in support of women victims of violence, as well as sharing of objectives, interventions and actions with the relevant bodies, in the broadest possible way, through inter-institutional steering committees, inter-departmental round tables or other *ad hoc* bodies that also involve the Networks.

## The decision-making process and methods of collaboration

In terms of decision-making, the rationale of the governance model is driven by a shared approach capable of harmonising the resulting strategies. This can be achieved through the following objectives, which cut across all the areas of intervention and characterise the implementation process as a whole, producing a coherent framework that:

- includes the vision of and inputs from the Department for Equal Opportunities, developed on the basis of the experience and results achieved, as well as the result of an overall strategic vision emerging from the meetings and discussions taking place within the Observatory on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence;
- integrates the contributions by the stakeholders and socio-economic partnerships, representing the interests of the parties involved and providing an informed and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of violence, with the possibility of supporting the central and local governments in defining the strategy underlying the Plan;
- accepts proposals and guidelines from national and local governance bodies, as well as comments and proposals from the thematic round tables.

Interaction between the various entities working to prevent and combat male violence against women is based on memoranda of understanding inspired by the principle of public-private partnership and the full engagement of all relevant bodies.

The local level of governance, where possible acting in accordance with the national level, ensures the full integration and coordination of regional policies, at the political level, in support of women victims of violence, as well as the widest possible sharing of objectives, interventions and actions by the relevant bodies at the local level, according to a bottom-up process.

The methods of collaboration to achieve interaction at the local level are intended to:

- enhance the use of existing forums for discussion and consultation between government and the social partners (conferences, round tables, etc.) to engage in dialogue, exchange content and good practices, and share methods and interventions;
- involve the relevant central government departments and regions in targeted agreements, memoranda of understanding and inter-institutional round tables, with the aim of jointly addressing all aspects of male violence against women;

- involve the local and provincial governments and metropolitan cities in planning and mapping processes, advancing collaboration with the local and provincial government associations (ANCI and UPI), by signing memoranda of understanding based on new foundations and systems of rules, for the establishment, where necessary, of “advisory bodies” or local arrangements to ensure optimal oversight of the interventions, within the framework of the governance model defined at regional level;
- enhance relations between local authorities, anti-violence centres and shelters.

## PART V

# Implementation of the plan



## Operational framework of actions for implementing the 2025-2027 Plan

This Plan has also been based on the monitoring results achieved by the DPO, regarding the actions carried out under the previous Plan, according to a highly participatory approach that involved all the institutional stakeholders and economic and social partners making up the Observatory on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

Specialised working groups have been set up within the Observatory, around the “Prevention”, “Protection and Support”, “Prosecute and Punish” and “Assistance and promotion” Pillars. The groups met in October and November 2024 and January 2025, in view of drafting this Plan, for the purpose of identifying useful priorities and implementation measures addressing the phenomenon, to ensure growth, improvement and adaptation to the general context as it evolves. The Plan was then submitted to the Unified Conference for its mandatory opinion, before being adopted by the Minister for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities.

To ensure the prompt implementation of the 2025-2027 Plan, it was necessary to prepare an operational framework for the actions carried out by the administrative entities involved, setting out the measures identified for each Pillar and priority, scheduled from 2025, and specifying which entities were involved in the implementation of each measure.

This operational framework for 2025 and 2026, which is presented and approved together with the 2025-2027 Plan, will be updated periodically by the DPO, with the support of the Observatory on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and in agreement with the political authority, on an annual basis, with additional dedicated actions and resources, in relation to the emerging priorities and needs, on the basis of the implementation of the Plan itself and the discussions with the actors involved at different levels of governance (Steering Committee and National Observatory on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, thematic round tables and working groups, NRRP Steering Committee, local networks, etc.).







**Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri**  
**Dipartimento per le pari opportunità**