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Sociopolitical Developments
in Europe

Violence against Women

On the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Finland

Marie Wittenius
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Contents

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 1 |
| 2 | Specialist support services (Article 22)..... | 4 |
| 2.1 | Domestic violence..... | 5 |
| 2.2 | Stalking..... | 11 |
| 2.3 | Violence in the name of so-called honour and forced marriage..... | 12 |
| 2.4 | Genital mutilation | 14 |
| 2.5 | Assessment | 15 |
| 3 | Shelters (Article 23)..... | 17 |
| 3.1 | Services..... | 18 |
| 3.2 | Funding and bases | 18 |
| 3.3 | Standards | 18 |
| 3.4 | Distribution..... | 19 |
| 3.5 | Availability..... | 19 |
| 3.6 | Access | 20 |
| 3.7 | Duration of stay..... | 20 |
| 3.8 | Miscellaneous | 21 |
| 3.9 | Assessment | 21 |
| 4 | Support for victims of sexual violence (Article 25)..... | 23 |
| 4.1 | Sexual violence referral centres for victims of sexual violence | 23 |
| 4.2. | Rape crisis centres for victims of sexual violence | 25 |
| 4.3 | Assessment | 27 |
| 5 | References..... | 28 |
| 6 | Annex | 30 |
| I. | Link list..... | 30 |
| II. | List of FMS member organisations and their areas of activity..... | 31 |
| III. | Overview table of shelters in Finland..... | 34 |
| | Current Publications | 38 |
| | Publishing Information | 39 |

List of tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 3: Shelters in Finland broken down by region: utilisation rate, people seeking protection, rejection rate | 20 |
| Table 4: Shelters in southern Finland: utilisation rate, people seeking protection, rejection rate | 20 |

1 Introduction

“Violence against women, including domestic violence, is one of the most serious forms of gender-based human rights violations in Europe that is still shrouded in silence.”

(CoE 2011: 1)

In this working paper, the Observatory examines the implementation of the **Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence** (Istanbul Convention, IC) to protect and support women affected by violence in Finland.¹

The Istanbul Convention is, at this time, the most far-reaching instrument for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence that is legally binding at international level (*ibid.*). The Convention of the Council of Europe (CoE) was signed in Istanbul in 2011 and entered into force in 2014. The Istanbul Convention introduces a holistic approach that aims to improve the protection of women in Europe against gender-based violence and to create Europe-wide minimum standards. Specifically, the Convention sets out obligations for a coordinated approach to prevent violence, protect victims, prosecute perpetrators, and to collect data. In order to supervise the implementation of the obligations in the States Parties, the Istanbul Convention provides for a comprehensive monitoring procedure², which is accompanied by an independent group of 15 experts (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, GREVIO).

The Convention defines violence against women as a human rights violation (Article 3a IC). It is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women (Preamble IC) and should hence be viewed as a consequence of structural discrimination. In this regard, women and girls affected by violence are not perceived as a homogeneous group. The Istanbul Convention takes into account the special protection needs of particular groups exposed to a greater risk of discrimination – such as women with disabilities, older women or women with addiction problems (CoE 2011: 16f). The Convention obliges the States Parties to make efforts to eliminate this form of discrimination against women and in doing so to contribute to the achievement of *de jure* and *de facto* gender equality.³

¹ The *Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe* has carried out a comparative research on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention on the Protection and Support of Women Experiencing Violence in Denmark, Finland, and Austria. This country-specific version presents the main findings of the study for Denmark. The full working paper and accompanying material such as overview lists of relevant national organisations can be found on our website: <https://sociopolitical-observatory.eu/keytopics/equaltreatmentandequality/>

² The initial audit is carried out by means of a *first (baseline) evaluation*. The key steps are: The State Party prepares a country report using a questionnaire drawn up by GREVIO. In addition, civil-society organisations can draft one or more alternative reports, in which they evaluate the status quo from their own perspective, and submit them to GREVIO. GREVIO then prepares the GREVIO baseline report, in which it evaluates the implementation of the obligations resulting from the Convention. The States Parties have the opportunity to respond to the GREVIO report. Afterwards, the Committee of the Parties can issue recommendations on the basis of the GREVIO report.

³ In order to clarify the scope of the Istanbul Convention, the Council of Europe explains that men can also be affected by some of the forms of violence covered by the Convention, especially domestic violence. But this is less often the case than for women. It is left to the discretion of the States to apply the regulations of the Istanbul Convention to men (as well as to children and older people (CoE n. y.)). Moreover, the Istanbul Convention states that neither sexual orientation nor gender identity may lead to discrimination when offering protection against violence. For instance, transgender women must therefore receive unrestricted access to the support system (*ibid.*).

The focus here is on Article 22 (Specialist support services), Article 23 (Shelters) and Article 25 (Support for victims of sexual violence). The working paper applies a uniform structure to describe and then assess the services and arrangements for each of these Articles in Denmark.⁴ In regard to Article 22, the available specialist support services are categorised according to the forms of violence set out in the Istanbul Convention. This is followed by the Article on shelters (Article 23) and the one addressing rape crisis or sexual violence referral centres for victims of sexual violence (Article 25). Each chapter ends with an assessment summarising the main findings.

Finland signed the Istanbul Convention immediately after it was passed in 2011 and ratified it on 17 April 2015. The Istanbul Convention entered into force in Finland on 1 August 2015. There is an **Action Plan for the Istanbul Convention** (NAPE 2017) covering 2018 to 2021, which was preceded by a 2011 action plan for reducing violence against women (STM 2010). GREVIO first evaluated the implementation of the Convention from November 2017 to September 2019.

The Finnish **Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö, STM)** and the independent **National Institute for Health and Welfare (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos, THL)** are assigned a key role in designing and implementing gender equality policy.⁵ Both bodies are also strongly involved in implementing the Istanbul Convention measures examined in this working paper. A **Committee for Implementing the Istanbul Convention (NAPE)** has also been set up within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health as the national co-ordinating body since the beginning of 2017.⁶

Along with its neighbouring Scandinavian states, Finland has often been singled out for its achievements in gender equality and passed the *Act on Equality between Women and Men* (609/1986) as early as 1986⁷. Included in the provisions of the act is the requirement that women must account for at least 40 percent of the people involved in planning and decision-making processes across various social fields. In addition, 47 percent of the successful candidates in the recent parliamentary elections of April 2019 were women, which is the highest ever proportion.⁸ In a European comparison, Finland ranks far above the average in the area of equality, taking fourth place in the current EIGE Gender Equality Index.⁹

Despite their positive standing in the field of equality, Finland and its Scandinavian neighbours (refer to the [Excursus: Nordic paradox](#)) are struggling with a high rate of violence against women and sexual violence in particular (refer to [Chapter 4](#)):

⁴ The information provided here is largely taken from the documents provided during the IC monitoring process (country reports, alternative reports, GREVIO baseline reports). In addition, thorough internet research was carried out for each state in order to obtain detailed information. Some relevant stakeholders were also contacted by email or telephone and asked for clarification concerning specific issues.

⁵ The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is responsible for submitting legislation on gender equality, coordinating the development of gender-sensitive projects and for general implementation of the government's gender equality policy. The following link provides an overview of the ministry's activities in the area of equality: <https://stm.fi/en/gender-equality>.

⁶ Press release by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on the establishment of the NAPE Committee, 17/11/2016: https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/1271139/toimikunta-naisiin-kohdistuvan-vakivallan-ja-perhevakivallan-torjumisek-1.

⁷ Some English translations of law texts are available on the FINLEX website <https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/>. Use the search function to find the number assigned to the law. These numbers will always be stated in the following sections when discussing Finnish legal texts.

⁸ Information from the National Institute for Health and Welfare: <https://thl.fi/en/web/gender-equality/gender-equality-in-finland/decision-making/politics-and-elections>.

⁹ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019>.

- In Finland, every second woman aged 15 and above is affected by physical, psychological and/or sexual violence (FRA 2012).
- 8,300 cases of domestic violence were reported to the police in 2017: The victim was female in 68.1 percent of the cases, and the suspected perpetrator was male in 77.8 percent of the cases. 37.1 percent of the reported cases of domestic violence took place within a partnership.¹⁰
- 5,063 people sought safety in shelters in 2018, including 2,697 adults and 2,358 children. Of the adults, 2,498 were female and 196 male. (THL 2019: 47)
- 1,338 cases of rape and 1,019 cases of other sexual assaults were reported in 2018.¹¹

Excursus: Nordic paradox

Although gender equality is, in principle, well advanced in the countries of Northern Europe, gender-based violence against women remains a persistent problem. Indeed, domestic violence and sexual violence against women are particularly high in Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, compared to Europe as a whole (AI 2019a: 11). In its study on violence against women, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights argues that this might be explainable due to the fact that women in more gender-equal societies feel more free to report gender-based violence in the first place (FRA 2012: 25). Other authors argue that rather the opposite might be the case (Wemrell et al. 2019: 16).¹² This phenomenon, in which high levels of violence against women are observed despite the society's advanced gender equality, is also known as the “**Nordic paradox**” (Gracia/Merlo 2016).

It is largely unclear why social change in the Nordic states has not led to an elimination of gender-based violence (ibid.). Nevertheless, a comprehensive meta-study of qualitative studies from Sweden managed to identify some possible mechanisms (Wemrell et al. 2019: 1). Included in them is the correlation that achieving what amounts to basic gender equality within society may prompt women to seek individual reasons for domestic violence either in themselves or their partners. Domestic violence as the manifestation of unequal power relations between men and women, which is a structural and not an individual phenomenon, sits uneasily, the study argues, with the principle of gender equality. Domestic and sexual violence, which is still happening, is therefore harder for the individual to frame as gender-based violence, which should in theory be already overcome. In turn, and paradoxically this makes it difficult for women to perceive themselves as victims of gender-based violence and to seek help (ibid.: 16).

¹⁰ Information from *Statistics Finland*, 31 May 2018: https://www.stat.fi/til/rpk/2017/15/rpk_2017_15_2018-05-31_tie_001_en.html.

¹¹ Information from *Statistics Finland*, 17 May 2019: https://www.stat.fi/til/rpk/2018/04/rpk_2018_04_2019-01-17_tie_001_en.html.

¹² The data from the FRA survey on violence against women (FRA 2012) does partly not support this thesis: According to the data, for example in Denmark and Finland, only 7 percent of women who were victims of physical or sexual violence contacted the police. The EU average is 14 percent. Data Explorer of the study of FRA on violence against women: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-violence-against-women-survey>.

2 Specialist support services (Article 22)

“1. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to provide or arrange for, in an adequate geographical distribution, immediate, short- and long-term specialist support services to any victim subjected to any of the acts of violence covered by the scope of this Convention.

2. Parties shall provide or arrange for specialist women’s support services to all women victims of violence and their children.”

(Article 22 IC)

Victims of violence need support and protection: Firstly, women affected by violence must be protected against further violent acts. Secondly, women must receive adequate support and assistance “[...] to overcome the multiple consequences of such violence and to rebuild their lives.” (CoE 2011: 21). The Istanbul Convention distinguishes between general and specialist support services for victims of violence: General support services are intended for the general population and provide assistance through public authorities in areas such as social services, health and employment services. Specialist support services are aimed exclusively at victims of certain forms of violence (ibid.: 23f.).

The Istanbul Convention specifically lists the following forms of violence:

- domestic violence (Article 3b IC),
- psychological violence (Article 33 IC)¹³,
- stalking (Article 34 IC),
- physical violence (Article 35 IC),
- sexual violence, including rape (Article 36 IC),
- sexual harassment (Article 40 IC)¹⁴,
- forced marriage (Article 37 IC),
- female genital mutilation (Article 38 IC),
- forced abortion and forced sterilisation (Article 39 IC), and
- violence in the name of culture, religion or tradition, including violence in the name of so-called “honour” (Article 42 IC).

Accessible nationwide, the specialist support services must provide support and assistance tailored precisely to meet the needs of victims. This includes the capacity to respond to each form of violence and to offer support to every group of victims, also those who are hard to reach.¹⁵

¹³ Psychological violence is not dealt with explicitly at this point, although it is seen as a particular type of violence that precursors or accompanies other forms, frequently domestic or sexual violence.

¹⁴ Article 40 IC sets out that the necessary legislative or other measures should be taken in order to ensure that sexual harassment is subject to criminal or other legal sanctions. It does not specifically address a necessary support system for victims. However, Kelly (2018: 15) and others point out the need to provide support in this area as well.

¹⁵ Paragraph 132 Explanatory Report to the IC: The types of assistance that the specialist support services must offer include: “[...] providing shelter and safe accommodation, immediate medical support, the collection of forensic medical evidence in cases of rape and sexual assault, short- and long-term psychological counselling, trauma care, legal counselling, advocacy and outreach services, telephone helplines to direct victims to the right type of service and specific services for children as victims or witnesses. (CoE 2011b: 24).

Excursus: Digital violence

The Istanbul Convention is based on a comprehensive and broad concept of violence that includes any acts that lead or might lead to physical, sexual, psychological or financial harm or suffering for women. It essentially encompasses all forms of violence against women and girls. Violence against women has acquired a new dimension due to the increased use and integration of digital media such as computers, Internet and smartphones in everyday life. Digital violence means the deliberate use of these media to the detriment of other persons. But the Convention does not mention digital violence explicitly.¹⁶ The Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention partially addresses digital violence as a form of violence in the section on stalking, defining it to include “following the victim in the virtual world” and “spreading untruthful information online” (CoE 2011: 32). A mapping study by the Council of Europe also classified psychological violence and sexual harassment as forms of violence that have digital equivalents (CoE 2018: 23f). This classification is the basis for GREVIO’s basic assessment that digital violence against women should be perceived as a “continuum of offline violence” (ibid.). In Europe, the Istanbul Convention is regarded as an instrument to prevent and combat violence against women in the digital realm.¹⁷

In Finland, the *Social Welfare Act* (1301/2014) sets out the provisions for social care and defines the forms and structures of social services. Section 11(5) of the Act states that support must be provided, in the form of social services, to victims of domestic violence and other forms of violence and abuse.

The following types of specialist support services are available in Finland:

- Crisis counselling and support provided on the one hand by 23 civil-society organisations and on the other by professionals from public services to victims of domestic violence (33 MARAC groups), intimate partner violence or violence in the social environment (refer to [Chapter 2.1](#))
- A counselling centre and multiple support groups for people affected by post-relationship stalking (refer to [Chapter 2.2](#))
- Two civil-society organisations with services for victims of violence in the name of so-called “honour” and forced marriage (refer to [Chapter 2.3](#))
- A project aimed at preventing female genital mutilation and circumcision (refer to [Chapter 2.4](#))
- 28 shelters for victims of domestic violence (refer to [Chapter 3](#))
- Two sexual violence referral centres and a support centre for victims of sexual assault (refer to [Chapter 4](#)).

2.1 Domestic violence

There are several contact points for victims of domestic violence in Finland:

¹⁶ See „Digital violence against women: new forms of violence and approaches to fight them in Europe”, Newsletter of the Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe 2/2019, <https://beobachtungsstelle-gesellschaftspolitik.de/f/27427e6a47.pdf>.

¹⁷ European Commission: Answer given by Ms Jourová on behalf of the Commission to a question for written answer to the Commission by Viorica Dăncilă (S&D) on 20 February 2018: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-007255-ASW_EN.html; Germany: Minor inquiry by the MPs Anke Domscheit-Berg, Cornelia Möhring, Dr Petra Sitte and others from the DIE LINKE parliamentary group on 29 November 2018: <https://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/061/1906174.pdf>.

- specialist support services from the network **Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters (Ensi- ja turvakotien liitto, FMS)**¹⁸,
- the **Multicultural Women's Association Finland (MONIKA)**¹⁹,
- in principle, all public agencies with which victims come into contact: If a dangerous situation is identified, the local **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC group)** is notified.

2.1.1 Services

The majority of support services for domestic violence are provided by member organisations within the **FMS network**. The FMS is a national association of 30 civil-society organisations. Its aim is to prevent domestic violence and to support children and families.

Not only do the members of the network operate shelters (refer to [Chapter 3](#)), they also run crisis centres for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and offer the following services:²⁰

- Open office hours and crisis support, telephone counselling, *CrisisChat*
- Individual, couple and group discussions, self-help groups
- Individual support for affected children, sometimes adapted to different age groups
- Support for trauma victims
- Practical support in reporting crimes or obtaining injunctions
- Applying for housing, legal aid
- Workshops on dealing with crises and non-violent resolution of problems
- Training for professionals
- Provision of safe housing in the event of acute risk²¹
- Support during the transition phase after a stay in a shelter (for example planning for the future, reintegration in professional life)

Some organisations point out that domestic violence can also involve sexual violence (refer to [Chapter 4](#)).

The degree of specialisation varies among member organisations: The member organisation *Pääkaupungin turvakoti ry*²², for example, concentrates exclusively on preventing domestic violence and intimate partner violence, as well as on the support of victims in this area. It runs three shelters (sites: Haaga, Pellas, Toukola), a counselling centre for domestic violence and a housing project with 18 council flats in Helsinki.

In contrast, the member organisation *Tampereen ensi- ja turvakoti ry* runs two shelters in Tampere for victims of domestic violence and offers support to young mothers and older people in the form of counselling, joint activities and an old people's home.²³

¹⁸ <https://ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi/en>

¹⁹ <https://monikanaiset.fi/en/>

²⁰ An overview of all member organisations within the FMS and selected activities is included in a tabular form in [Annex III](#).

²¹ Three organisations provide safe houses. Only one of the providers quoted the costs, namely 50 euros per night for adults and 20 euros per night for children (not including babies).

²² <http://paakaupunginturvakoti.fi/>

²³ <https://ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi/tampereenensijaturvakoti>

Seven of the 30 member organisations do not offer any specialist support services as defined by Article 22 of the Istanbul Convention. Three of these seven organisations provide information about violence on their websites, or link to the *Online Shelter* of the FMS (refer to Chapter 3.2.1). Despite being members of the FMS, it was not possible to find any references to violence against women on the websites of the other four organisations.²⁴

The organisation **MONIKA** provides services aimed at women from ethnic minorities and at migrant women. In addition to group activities for female victims of violence, it operates a shelter, a telephone counselling service in multiple languages and offers support for integration within Finnish society (WAVE 2018: 28, 31). Its website does not describe the services in any detail, which makes it impossible to list them all. Nonetheless, the organisation is frequently mentioned in reports (as well as in the context of violence in the name of so-called “honour” and forced marriage: refer to Chapter 2.3). In its 2017 report on the situation of specialist support services for women in Europe, the network *Women Against Violence Europe* mentioned MONIKA as the only intervention centre in Finland that offers activities for migrant women affected by domestic violence (WAVE 2018: 57).

The **MARAC Method** is a systematic approach to working with victims of domestic violence. The method is designed to identify victims of domestic violence at an early stage in order to break the cycle of recurring abuse. It involves a standardised procedure, divided into three steps: 1. Personal risk exposure is determined using a standardised checklist. Any public body that comes into contact with a relevant person can perform the assessment. The National Institute for Health and Welfare has made the checklist available on its website, along with other documents and forms. 2. Once the checklist has been completed, it is reviewed by a professional. If he or she comes to the conclusion that there is a high risk potential, the case is referred to the MARAC group and discussed at its regular meetings. The groups are made up of members of agencies in the fields of health and social services, the police, shelters and addiction counselling centres, among others. A personal safety plan is drawn up as part of the meeting. 3. The person is informed, and the measures set out in the safety plan are implemented together. The group reappraises the case if certain measures cannot be carried out or if the threat remains.²⁵

Research into implementation of the method in Finland yielded an evaluation report by National Institute for Health and Welfare from 2014 (Minna/Lappinen 2014) and the concluding report of a working group on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention from 2016 from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (October/Minna 2016). Both of these documents are only available in Finnish. There is also a short journal article from 2016, written by the author of the two texts mentioned above (Minna 2016). The texts state that a pilot project on the MARAC Method started at three locations in Finland in 2010. The pilot project was successful, so it was transformed into a longer-term programme with funding until 2014.

²⁴ Authors' own research; refer to the table in Annex II.

²⁵ Information on the procedure for the MARAC Method, retrieved from the website of the Finnish National Council for Crime Prevention, a cooperative agency set up by the Finnish Ministry of Justice: <https://rikoksantorjunta.fi/en/marac>; forms (only available in Finnish) on the website of the National Institute for Health and Welfare: https://thl.fi/fi/web/lapset-nuoret-ja-perheet/tyon_tueksi/lomakkeet/lomakkeet_vakivallan_puheeksi_ottamiseen.

A study of all 259 cases managed using the MARAC Method was conducted from 2010 to 2014. This involved reviewing the police files and carrying out case interviews with the persons involved, six months after the MARAC group meeting. The evaluation reveals that the method is effective in reviewing cases of domestic violence and that using the questionnaires is particularly helpful for professionals when assessing the situation. The spiral of re-victimisation was broken in 70 percent of the cases, and no new police reports were filed during this six-month period. Victims also reported positively on the outcomes of the method, although 40 percent stated nonetheless that they were still exposed to various forms of stalking, despite the end to physical violence.

The country report points to another evaluation of the MARAC Method, but its statistics have not been published to date (Government of Finland 2018: 21). The method remains relatively unknown in Finland and is not applied by all stakeholders in the local government districts in which it has already been implemented. The report points out furthermore that additional training is needed for professionals to apply the method (see Minna/Lappinen 2014; October/Minna 2016; Minna 2016).

2.1.2 Funding and bases

Most of the support services for domestic violence are state-funded, and additional resources are obtained from donations. State financing is managed by the **Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA)**²⁶. The STEA works with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and is responsible for the funding and monitoring of projects in the areas of social care and health. Funds are obtained from the proceeds of *Veikkaus*²⁷, a kind of state lottery.

The country report for Finland sets out that, at the time of publishing in 2018, STEA disbursed funds totalling five million euros to services related to intimate partner violence, of which the majority was allocated to the FMS (Government of Finland 2018: 17).

In total, **FMS** obtains 70 percent of its funds from STEA (*Veikkaus*). Another 12 percent are provided by the *Lasten Päivän Säätiö (Children's Day Foundation)*²⁸. The member organisations also receive financial donations and donations in kind from businesses and individuals. Furthermore, member organisations pay an annual fee of 85 euros. The funding situation of the FMS member organisations cannot be identified precisely. Some of the services state on their websites that they receive additional funds from private foundations, in addition to state funding from STEA, various ministries, local authorities or cities, as well as EU funding. Users can access the majority of services free of charge. One of the member organisations, *Perheidenpaikka ry*²⁹,

²⁶ <https://www.stea.fi/web/en/stea/organisation>

²⁷ <https://www.veikkaus.fi/fi/yritys?lang=en>

²⁸ <https://www.linnanmaki.fi/fi/lasten-paivan-saatio/>

²⁹ <https://ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi/perheidenpaikka/> These costs may be refunded by the local authority, but it was not possible to obtain more detailed information in this regard.

offers emergency accommodation in a family home (≠ shelter), for which it charges 50 euros for adults and 20 euros for children per day.

The organisation **MONIKA** states that it is mainly funded by the City of Helsinki, STEA (*Veikkaus*), the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Education and Culture, the fund *Stiftelsen Den Sjunde Mars Fonden*, the City of Vantaa and the European Social Fund.

The projects using the **MARAC Method** were carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and have been coordinated and evaluated by the National Institute for Health and Welfare since the end of the project period. It was not possible to obtain information on how much funding is used in this regard.

2.1.3 Standards

According to the National Institute for Health and Welfare, each local authority is required to prepare an **action programme to prevent domestic violence and to support victims of domestic violence**. Each local authority has an official office that coordinates practical implementation of the measures. Besides providing these services, the local authorities should be aware of, and coordinate with, other local service providers. The local authorities are also responsible for training the social work and health personnel with regard to domestic violence and intimate partner violence.³⁰ In 2008, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health published recommendations for local and regional social services and the health sector to help them identify and prevent intimate partner violence and domestic violence.³¹ One of the measures set out for implementation in the Istanbul Convention action plan involves, in particular, enhancing the skills of shelter staff in matters relating to intimate partner violence, responding to crises and trauma and supporting older people, people with disabilities and children (NAPE 2017:22). It was not possible to obtain information on specific implementation measures.

Some of the **member organisations of FMS** state that they also advise professionals. However, research did not reveal any systematic procedure in the form of a syllabus or similar. In its *Senja programme (Sensitiveness Model for Professionals of Jurisprudence)*³², the *Tukinainen Rape Crisis Centre* offers courses for legal professionals and the police on the subjects of trauma, sexual offences, domestic violence, victims with disabilities and very young victims (refer to [Chapter 4.2.1](#)).

The National Institute for Health and Welfare provides training for professionals who want to apply the **MARAC Method**. In addition, the website offers free information about the method, as well as material for further training.³³

The regional courts in the local government districts have **public legal aid offices** in which persons without the necessary resources can file applications for representation in any legal proceedings.³⁴ According to the information on the Finland page of the European e-Justice Portal

³⁰ Information from the National Institute for Health and Welfare: https://thl.fi/fi/web/lapset-nuoret-ja-perheet/tyon_tueksi/vakivallan-ehkaisy/lahisuhdevakivalta/kunnilla.

³¹ <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe201504226067> (only available in Finnish)

³² <https://senjanetti.fi/en>

³³ Information material from the National Institute for Health and Welfare: https://thl.fi/fi/web/lapset-nuoret-ja-perheet/tyon_tueksi/menetelmat/marak

³⁴ <https://oikeus.fi/oikeusapu/en/index.html>

of October 2018, all victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence in Finland have access to free legal aid.³⁵ The legal aid offices are primarily open to all citizens, so this is not a specialist support service, rather a general support service, according to Article 20 of the Istanbul Convention.

2.1.4 Distribution

Twenty-three of the 30 member organisations within FMS offer support services in matters relating to domestic violence as defined by Article 20. They are spread across the country: Two organisations are active in southwestern Finland, two in eastern and northern Finland, six in western and central Finland and nine in southern Finland, including Helsinki.³⁶

The organisation **MONIKA** operates in Helsinki.

According to a presentation by the National Institute for Health and Welfare on the **MARAC Method**, there were 33 MARAC groups in Finland in 2017. The presentation visualises their distribution using a map, which shows their even spread across the whole country.³⁷

2.1.5 Availability

Research identified websites for all **FMS member organisations** that offer specialist support services relating to domestic violence, as well as for the organisation **MONIKA**. The organisations use these websites to describe and explain their services in varying degrees of precision. Telephone numbers for contact persons who can provide additional information on the services were identified in all cases. Some organisations offer their own support helplines as well as an online chat function.

The websites of the **Ministry of Social Affairs and Health** and the **National Institute for Health and Welfare** give extensive information about various forms of violence and provide some links to relevant contact points.³⁸

Within the **MARAC Method**, victims are ideally identified by filling in the questionnaire together with one of the public agencies. It was not possible to identify a central contact point or relevant contact persons from local MARAC groups for the event that victims proactively seek to have their cases addressed within a MARAC group³⁹.

2.1.6 Access

The specialist support services offered by the **FMS member organisations** in cases of domestic violence are usually aimed explicitly at women, men and children.

The organisation **MONIKA** only works with women from ethnic minorities and migrant women.

³⁵ https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_rights_of_victims_of_crime_in_criminal_proceedings-171-FI-maximizeMS-en.do?clang=en&idSubpage=3&member=1#n08

³⁶ Refer to the table in Annex II.

³⁷ <https://thl.fi/documents/605877/3375830/Martta+October+MARAK.pdf/ec2b4786-c2c1-4d32-9fa4-0a3175b996c6>, p. 5.

³⁸ Website of the National Institute for Health and Welfare: https://thl.fi/web/lapset-nuoret-ja-perheet/tyon_tueksi/vakivallan-ehkaisy/lahisuhdevakivalta, website of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: <https://stm.fi/en/preventing-violence-and-crime>

³⁹ This is recommended, for example, among victims of stalking; refer to Chapter 2.2.

2.1.7 Miscellaneous

It is notable that the websites of the **FMS member organisations**, when discussing their domestic violence support services, frequently address perpetrators explicitly. One organisation, *Lahden ensi- ja turvakoti ry*⁴⁰, offers a comprehensive range of therapies for perpetrators.

2.2 Stalking

Finland has a centre for post-relationship stalking called “**Varjo**”⁴¹.

Furthermore, two of the **FMS member organisations** state that they can assist with obtaining an injunction as part of their support for persons exposed to domestic violence.⁴² The *Varjo Support Center* website also lists the FMS member organisations as general contacts for victims of post-relationship stalking.

The website of the Finnish police force provides a brochure in ten languages about obtaining an injunction. Stalking is listed as one of the grounds for obtaining the order.⁴³ The information is kept very general.⁴⁴

2.2.1 Services

The **Varjo Support Center** provides information on various forms of stalking, as well as on first steps that victims may take. In this context, it mentions the MARAC groups and recommends visiting one to prepare a safety plan (refer to [Chapter 2.1](#)).

The following services are offered:

- Counselling and support
- One-on-one counselling in Mikkeli and Oulu, as well as online support, for both victims and perpetrators of post-relationship stalking
- Peer-to-peer sharing opportunities in an online forum
- Support groups in Mikkeli, Oulu and online
- Training and counselling for professionals
- Research associations

2.2.2 Funding and bases

The **Varjo Support Center** is run by the staff of the two FMS member organisations *Oulun ensi- ja turvakoti ry*⁴⁵ and *VIOLA – Free from Violence (väkivallasta vapaaksi ry)*⁴⁶. No information on their funding was obtainable. It is nonetheless reasonable to assume that funding is obtained from

⁴⁰ <https://ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi/lahdenensijaturvakoti/>

⁴¹ <https://varjosta.fi/tukikeskus-varjo/>

⁴² Refer to the table in [Annex II](#).

⁴³ In 2013, the Finnish parliament passed amendment 879/2013 to the Finnish Criminal Code. This amendment entered into force in early 2014 and defined stalking as a criminal offence. Paragraph 7a of the Criminal Code now stipulates that a person who repeatedly threatens, watches, contacts or otherwise pursues another person without grounds and thus causes fear or distress is punishable by a fine or a custodial sentence of up to two years.

⁴⁴ https://www.poliisi.fi/crimes/restraining_order, languages: Finnish, Swedish, English, Albanian, Arabic, Kurdish, Persian, Serbo-Croatian, Somali, Sorani

⁴⁵ https://ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi/oulunensijaturvakoti/apua/vakivalta-lahisuhteessa/#eron_jalkeinen_vaino

⁴⁶ <http://www.violary.fi/in-english/>

FMS, and hence indirectly from the state via STEA, as the centre is operated by the two FMS member organisations.

2.2.3 Standards

Research did not reveal any standards for specialist support services in cases of stalking. GREVIO's evaluation notes that the quality of support provided to victims is inadequate, which is attributable in particular to a lack of specialist knowledge in this area (GREVIO 2019:30).⁴⁷

2.2.4 Distribution

The **Varjo Support Center** states that it operates nationwide, and not only at the locations of the two managing organisations in the regions of Oulu and south Savo. Precise addresses could not be found, presumably to protect victims of stalking.

2.2.5 Availability

The two managing organisations behind the **Varjo Support Center** refer to the service on their websites. The *Varjo Support Center* website lists phone numbers and contacts at the offices of the managing organisations in Mikkeli and Oulu.

2.2.6 Access

A non-Finnish speaker would have great difficulty finding the **Varjo Support Center** by searching the Internet, as the website is only available in Finnish and does not even include a short presentation of the project in English. Translation software gives the name of the centre, *Varjo*, as "shadow" and adds "eruption" for the Finnish word used by the organisation, which actually means "separation". Hence, the service is not immediately identifiable as a contact point for victims of post-relationship stalking.

2.3 Violence in the name of so-called honour and forced marriage

Two civil-society organisations offering services to victims of violence in the name of so-called "honour" and forced marriage were⁴⁸ identified in Finland:

- Organisation **MONIKA**
- **SOPU project**⁴⁹ by the organisation *Loisto settlement (Loisto Settlementti ry)*⁵⁰

⁴⁷ In regard to its source, GREVIO points to a 2016 article in the journal *Qualitative Social Work*. The study investigates the accounts of 15 female victims of stalking in Finland: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1473325016644315>.

⁴⁸ Finnish law does not include any statute making forced marriage a criminal offence, as demanded by the Istanbul Convention (Articles 32 & 37 IC). Information provided by the *Finnish League for Human Rights* indicates that the only reason for annulling a marriage under the provisions of the Finnish Marriage Act is if the ceremony was not carried out lawfully (FLHR 2017: 5). An answer given in a questionnaire submitted by Finland in 2018 as part of the evaluation of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings states that forced marriage is perceived as human trafficking or equivalent (CoE 2018a: 19). Amnesty International is not aware of any convictions in cases of forced marriage under the provisions of the Criminal Code (AI 2017: 15).

⁴⁹ <https://soputila.fi/en/>

⁵⁰ <https://loistosetlementti.fi/english/>

2.3.1 Services

The website of the organisation **MONIKA**⁵¹ does not mention any specialist support services for victims of violence in the name of so-called “honour” or forced marriage. Nonetheless, the organisation appears to be active in this area, and the information and data it provides on the subject of forced marriage are used by the Finnish League for Human Rights in a 2016 study on violence in the name of so-called “honour” (FLHR 2017) and in a 2017 statement by Amnesty International for the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (AI 2017).

The Amnesty International report states that MONIKA becomes aware of 15 cases of forced marriage or of threat through forced marriage and 40 to 50 cases of violence in the name of so-called “honour” each year (AI 2017: 15). Information contained in the FLHR report indicates that MONIKA has records of 60 cases of forced marriage for the period 2011 to 2014 (FLHR 2017: 5).

The organisation *Loisto settlement* operates various social and youth-work projects that consider gender and cultural aspects. One of the projects, **SOPU**, prioritises the prevention of violence in the name of so-called “honour”. The following services are offered as part of the project:

- Shared group activities and camps, peer support activities for girls and boys, as well as for mothers and fathers
- Confidential support for families or individuals
- Courses and awareness-raising among young people, families and professionals
- Information on the issues of dating and sexuality
- Advice for young people who feel under pressure from their parents to enter into relationships

2.3.2 Funding and bases

The organisation behind the **SOPU Project**, *Loisto settlement*, claims to obtain its principal funding from STEA (*Veikkaus*) and the cities of Helsinki and Espoo. It was not possible to obtain a precise breakdown of the funding. According to its website, the SOPU Project was carried out between 2012 and 2017 as a development project by *Loisto settlement* and has received long-term funding from STEA (*Veikkaus*) since the start of 2018.

2.3.3 Standards

It was not possible to research standards for the specialist support services relating to violence in the name of so-called “honour” and forced marriage.

⁵¹ The organisation Monika has already been discussed in [Chapter 2.1](#) on domestic violence. Details of the organisation's funding and bases, distribution and availability, are only shown there and will not be discussed once more in this section.

2.3.4 Distribution

The organisation behind the **SOPU Project**, *Loisto settlement*, states that the projects on violence in the name of so-called “honour” are active in the metropolitan region of Helsinki. It was not possible to obtain more information on the exact location.

2.3.5 Availability

The **SOPU Project** website provides email addresses and telephone numbers for the counsellors and the languages offered. The project’s news page also lists times and dates for confidential online chats, as well as the available languages at each time.

2.3.6 Access

It was difficult to research information on the services offered by **MONIKA** to victims of forced marriage, and even then the details were incomplete (refer to [Chapter 2.1.1](#)). Therefore, it appears that these persons only have limited access to the support service.

2.4 Genital mutilation

Information was identified concerning one support project, **KokoNainen**⁵², by the *Finnish League for Human Rights* (FLHR)⁵³, which is aimed at preventing female genital mutilation and circumcision.

The current action plan on preventing genital mutilation for the period 2018 to 2020 is based on an assumption that around 10,000 women and girls are affected by genital mutilation and 650 to 3,080 girls are at risk (Koukkula/Klemetti 2019: 9).

2.4.1 Services

The FLHR has operated the project **KokoNainen**, which aims to prevent both mutilation and circumcision of female genitals and to publicise the issue, since 2002. The objectives of the project are:

- to enable people from relevant communities to engage in dialogue by means of group-based and individual discussions and
- to offer training on this topic to students and professionals, including the police and social services.

2.4.2 Funding and bases

The Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and STEA (*Veikkaus*) fund the **FLHR** activities as the organisation behind the KokoNainen project.

⁵² <https://ihmisoikeusliitto.fi/english/female-genital-mutilation/>

⁵³ The FLHR is a civil-society organisation that monitors the human-rights situation in Finland. This organisation mainly carries out studies into human rights in Finland and informs decision-makers and the public about these subjects. The English-language website of the FLHR lists discrimination and racism, female genital mutilation and violence in the name of so-called “honour” (forced marriage is also covered under the latter) as priority areas: <https://ihmisoikeusliitto.fi/english/>

2.4.3 Standards

It was not possible to obtain information on any standards for specialist support services in the area of genital mutilation.

The current action plan for preventing genital mutilation aims to include the subject in training curricula and courses for professionals in social services and the health system. The National Institute for Health and Welfare plans to develop an online course on this issue. (Koukkula/Klemetti 2019: 67–68). However, research did not reveal any specific courses on the subject that are currently available.

There was also an action plan in place for the period 2012 to 2016 (STM 2012). The alternative report by the **FLHR** and the *End Female Genital Mutilation European Networks (End FGM EU)* criticises that implementation of the first action plan on genital mutilation was inadequate and that the training it announced was provided exclusively by the FLHR itself (FLHR/End FGM EU, n. y.). An evaluation of the first action plan was carried out by the National Institute for Health and Welfare, but is only available in Finnish (Koukkula et al. 2017).

2.4.4 Distribution

FLHR's services are aimed at all victims in Finland. The region in which, for example, training courses are offered is not mentioned.

2.4.5 Availability

The **FLHR** has its headquarters in Helsinki. Research did not reveal any activities taking place at this location within the **KokoNainen** project. A general telephone number for the FLHR is provided, along with information on the staff. However, there are no specific details for persons seeking support.

2.4.6 Access

The **KokoNainen** project states that it has concentrated so far on persons from the Somalian, Ethiopian, Eritrean and Sudanese communities and that it is currently widening its focus to include other migrant groups.

2.5 Assessment

In Finland, specialist support services are provided for all forms of violence examined in this working paper. Support services in the field of domestic violence are relatively extensive, which can be attributed in part to the well-organised cooperation in the national network *Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters*: The network offers easily accessible, specialist support services for victims of domestic violence almost nationwide, namely in five of Finland's six regions⁵⁴. The services are coordinated in terms of content, and detailed information is available online. There are also numerous counselling services (via telephone, chat or in person), which are easily accessible for victims. However, it was not possible to research figures on the specific

⁵⁴ It was not possible to identify any support services in the Lapland region. For the regional distribution of services, refer to Annex II.

utilisation and workload of the services. In its evaluation, GREVIO notes that the support services for domestic violence are making efforts to provide information on this form of violence. However, information on genital mutilation, forced marriage and violence in the name of so-called “honour” in particular is not easily accessible. (GREVIO 2019: 29).

The MARAC Method in particular is used to improve the support and protection system for victims through cooperation and information sharing between different agencies and services. While the method is mainly used for victims of domestic violence, projects dealing with other forms of violence such as stalking are mentioned as well. The MARAC Method has the potential to benefit not only a variety of stakeholders within the support system (civil-society organisations and state agencies), but also the work with various forms of violence. In its evaluation, GREVIO also recommends that this inter-organisational collaboration should be institutionalised and broadened to include specific forms of violence such as forced marriage and violence in the name of so-called “honour” (ibid.: 28).

In contrast to the extended structures in place to tackle domestic violence, specialist services for victims of stalking, genital mutilation, violence in the name of so-called “honour” and forced marriage are quite thin on the ground: The *Varjo Support Center* for post-relationship stalking and the SOPU project, which works with victims of violence in the name of so-called “honour”, offer wide-ranging counselling activities and engage in extensive youth work. The *KokoNainen* project focuses predominantly on public awareness on the topic of genital mutilation. It does not offer any direct support to victims. GREVIO expresses particular criticism of the insufficient training of professionals in the assistance of girls and women affected by this form of violence (ibid.: 31). In a study on violence in the name of so-called “honour” from 2016, the *Finnish League for Human Rights* is critical that the Finnish authorities and professionals are, to a large extent, inadequately informed and lack the requisite skills to offer victim support (FLHR 2017: 6–8). Overall, it is difficult to obtain information about the services for stalking and those provided by the MONIKA organisation by means of Internet research. Following initial research, it is either unclear where exactly the activities or services take place, or they are located exclusively in the metropolitan region of Helsinki.

In addition to the insufficient provision of services for forms of violence other than domestic violence, GREVIO notes that the social services are inadequately equipped to respond to and tackle the specific needs of minorities such as migrant or Sámi women (GREVIO 2019: 30).

Provision of these specialist support services is funded by the state. All projects state that they largely receive their funding from the state lottery *Veikkaus*, which is disbursed by STEA. They obtain additional resources from local authorities or cities, as well as from a number of foundations and individual donors. It remains unclear whether the services have adequate funding, as research did not reveal any appraisals in this regard. Equally, it is not possible to offer an assessment of whether the available funding enables long-term planning.

3 Shelters (Article 23)

“Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to provide for the setting-up of appropriate, easily accessible shelters in sufficient numbers to provide safe accommodation for and to reach out proactively to victims, especially women and their children.”

(Article 23 IC)

Specialised shelters for people affected by violence have the primary task of providing rapid and low-threshold protection around the clock if possible. In addition, legal and psychosocial counselling and effective cooperation with all authorities and institutions involved are needed to support victims.

The Finnish shelters for victims of actual or threatened domestic violence have been state-supervised and funded via the **National Institute for Health and Welfare** since 2015. There are no shelters outside this system. This arrangement dates back to the so-called *Shelter Act* (short for *Act on Compensation Payable to Shelter-Service Provision from State Funds* (1354/2014)), which entered into force on 1 January 2015 and transferred responsibility for the shelters from the local authorities to the state. Prior to this, there had been no legal obligation in Finland to provide shelters. The act is therefore seen as a milestone in the emergence of the country’s system to protect against violence. The *Shelter Act* defines the terms “shelter”⁵⁵ and “domestic violence”⁵⁶, specifies the duties of the National Institute for Health and Welfare and describes the conditions for the provision of services, state subsidies and for the evaluation.

At the time of writing (2019), there were 28 shelters with 202 places in Finland.⁵⁷

The shelters are operated by:

1. **Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters (Ensi- ja turvakotien liitto, FMS)**⁵⁸: 18 of the shelters are made available by 14 civil-society organisations from the FMS network.
2. **Local authorities** or associations of local authorities⁵⁹: Seven of the researched shelters are operated by local authorities.
3. Other civil-society organisations: There are three shelters run by organisations that are not part of FMS: the shelters **Sophie Mannerheimin** and **Mona**, as well as the **Villa Familia**.

⁵⁵ Shelters are defined as free crisis centres that are open 24/7 to individuals or families that have experienced or are at risk of domestic violence.

⁵⁶ The definition of domestic violence includes physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence against a former partner, spouse, child, parent or other close relative. This meets the requirements set out in Article 23 of the Istanbul Convention.

⁵⁷ An overview of all shelters, available family places and management organisations for 2017, 2018 and 2019 is included in the table in Annex III.

⁵⁸ <https://ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi/en/>

⁵⁹ The local authorities provide a broad portfolio of social and health services, so they do not fulfil the criteria for specialist support services. Instead, they should be perceived as a hybrid form of specialist support services within general support services.

3.1 Services

According to the **National Institute for Health and Welfare**, the shelters it supervises provide:

- Free and secure accommodation 24/7
- Psycho-social support
- Counselling and guidance in crisis situations

The **FMS** also operates an “Online Shelter” (*nettiturvakoti*)⁶⁰, a website for all victims of domestic violence and intimate partner violence that is intended to facilitate access to help for all victims. The service mainly provides information on the subject of violence and includes a chat function. In particular, the website includes a summarised list of all services available at the FMS contact points and shelters. The vast majority of FMS member organisations have added a link to the Online Shelter on their websites.⁶¹

3.2 Funding and bases

All shelters are uniformly funded and regulated by the state. The **National Institute for Health and Welfare** coordinates the shelters nationwide. State support is awarded annually by the National Institute for Health and Welfare, taking into account the allocated amount in the government budget. This means that the institutions have financial planning security for one year. The funding for shelters was 11.55 million euros in 2015 and 2016 and increased to 13.55 million in 2017 and to 17.55 million in 2018. (Government of Finland 2018: 56) According to the action plan for the Istanbul Convention 2018–2021, the funding is set to rise to 19 million euros in 2019, principally to improve nationwide access to shelters (NAPE 2017: 22). According to the GREVIO report, the funds for 2019 amount to 19.55 million euros (GREVIO 2019:33).

3.3 Standards

While the general supervision and monitoring of the shelters is the responsibility of the **National Institute for Health and Welfare**, the Shelter Act ensures that the measures taken by the shelters are overseen by the relevant public administration authorities in the regions and the Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira)⁶², which is the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health’s national regulator for service providers in the health and social sectors.

The state funding via the National Institute for Health and Welfare requires the organisations operating the shelters to adhere to existing minimum standards and regulations.

The Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the National Institute for Health and Welfare together developed the first set of non-binding quality recommendations for shelters in 2013. The document they have drawn up is extensive and, running to 50 pages, provides the basic principles of work in this field, ranging from a definition of domestic violence, the need for shelters and violence prevention to the working procedures in shelters and cooperation between different social services. (THL 2013) Once the *Shelter Act* had entered into force, thus allocating responsibility for shelters to the state, a decree (598/2015) on the qualifications and training required by staff in the

⁶⁰ <https://nettiturvakoti.fi/>

⁶¹ Refer to the table in Annex III.

⁶² <https://www.valvira.fi/web/en>

shelters was passed, along with an amendment (381/2018). The decree regulates the qualifications and training for shelter staff: Employees of the institutions must have a degree in social work or healthcare and must have professional experience with domestic violence. A master's degree is required for managerial roles. Among other things, the amendment that entered into force on 1 January 2019 specifies in particular the selection of service providers and the details of funding payments.⁶³

3.4 Distribution

The statistical report of the **National Institute for Health and Welfare** for 2018 states that there were 27 shelters nationwide with 179 available places that year. These figures will rise to 28 shelters and 202 places in 2019.

Furthermore, the statistical report for 2018 includes figures for utilisation rates and accepted and rejected applicants at each shelter. For 2018, the rejection rate⁶⁴ is 27.3 percent nationwide and the average utilisation rate of shelters is 61.9 percent.

There are 12 shelters in southern Finland, two in the south-west, three in the east, seven in western and central Finland, three in northern Finland and one in Lapland.⁶⁵

3.5 Availability

Shelters must be open 24/7 to meet the requirements of the *Shelter Act*. Telephone numbers for counselling and information on the subject of domestic violence could be researched on the websites of most shelters.

Data obtained from the statistical reports (THL 2018; THL 2019)⁶⁶ of the **National Institute for Health and Welfare** shows that southern Finland has, for several years, experienced the strongest demand at national level with the highest average utilisation and rejection rates for shelters. 50.7 percent of all people seeking protection – whether accepted or rejected – came from the region of southern Finland in 2017, with the proportion rising to 52.6 percent in 2018.

| Region | Ø Utilisation rate | | People seeking protection | | Rejection rate | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 |
| Southern Finland | 70.3% | 71.2% | 1,859 | 2,257 | 39.3% | 38.4% |
| Western/central Finland | 67.0% | 60.2% | 815 | 1,200 | 35.0% | 20.3% |
| Eastern Finland | 55.0% | 52.7% | 573 | 473 | 1.4% | 13.2% |
| South/west Finland | 53.0% | 50.0% | 446 | 517 | 6.9% | 3.5% |
| Northern Finland | 43.0% | 54.7% | 455 | 496 | 7.9% | 17.1% |
| Lapland | 35.0% | 33.0% | 173 | 120 | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Total | 61.1% | 61.9% | 4,321 | 5,063 | 28.5% | 27.3% |

⁶³ The amendment is very recent, so it was not possible to locate a translation of the text. It was hence not possible to research any further details.

⁶⁴ Calculation method: Number of rejections / number of rejected and accepted people in shelters

⁶⁵ Refer to the table in [Annex III](#).

⁶⁶ All details are shown in the table in [Annex III](#).

Table 1: Shelters in Finland broken down by region: utilisation rate, people seeking protection, rejection rate

The region of southern Finland has shelters in the cities of Espoo, Hämeenlinna, Helsinki (four), Imatra, Kotka, Lahti, Porvoo, Raasepori, and Vantaa. Local authorities operate three shelters in southern Finland. None of them are in Helsinki. The figures show that the shelters run by **member organisations of the FMS** continuously exhibit extremely high utilisation rates, despite the increase in available places from 52 (2017) to 66 (2018) and the associated reduction in the rejection rate.

| Operated by | Ø Utilisation rate | | People seeking protection | | Rejection rate | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 |
| FMS | 82.5% | 82.0% | 952 | 1,304 | 49.2% | 43.6% |
| Civil-society organisations | 77.0% | 78.7% | 524 | 570 | 33.1% | 40.5% |
| Local authorities | 47.3% | 42.0% | 383 | 383 | 6.1% | 2.5% |
| Total | 61.1% | 61.9% | 4,321 | 5,063 | 28.5% | 27.3% |

Table 2: Shelters in southern Finland: utilisation rate, people seeking protection, rejection rate

3.6 Access

The shelters are primarily aimed at victims of domestic violence. The services provided by the shelters are generally available to both men and women, as well as children. The system is also accessible for people with unclear migration status (GREVIO 2019: 43). One exception is the **shelter MONA** in Helsinki, which is run by the organisation MONIKA (refer to [Chapters 2.1 and 2.3](#)) and is open to migrant women only. Based on the data from the statistical report of the National Institute for Health and Welfare, 93 percent of adults who were supported in a shelter in 2018 were women (THL 2019).

According to the country report, the majority of shelters are designed to be barrier-free for people with restricted mobility. Transport services to other institutions can be organised (Government of Finland 2018: 56). This information was only found explicitly on the website of one **member organisation of FMS**, *Raahen ensi- ja turvakoti ry*⁶⁷.

3.7 Duration of stay

The country report explains that the shelters are intended for short-term stays (Government of Finland 2018). It was not possible to research what this means in practice, and whether there is a limit to the duration of stay in the shelters. The **average duration of stay** in 2018 was 16 days. Only 2.7 percent of the people who lived in a shelter in 2018 stayed for longer than 60 days. The largest proportion of victims (2018: 27.4 percent) remained for between one and three days.

The FMS member organisation VIOLA – *Free from Violence* was responsible for the **ARKI Project**⁶⁸, which was initiated by the Ministry of Justice, from August 2017 to the end of 2018. It was intended to develop a post-shelter model for social and health services in the south Savo

⁶⁷ <https://ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi/raahenensijaturvakoti/>

⁶⁸ <http://www.violary.fi/arki-hanke/>

(essote)⁶⁹ region. The project aims to develop a support system that combines official and non-governmental services for victims of violence and persecution after their stay in a shelter. The active phase of the project started in 2018, which involves piloting and evaluation of group activities in cooperation with the developers and other civil-society organisations. It was not possible to research any additional information.

Moreover, two other **FMS member organisations**⁷⁰ mention that their services for victims of domestic violence include support in looking for a new home or general practical assistance after a stay in a shelter (refer to Chapter 2.1).

3.8 Miscellaneous

In November 2018, the **National Institute for Health and Welfare** carried out an **information campaign** on shelters. This included a radio campaign and involved marketing the services via social media and search engine optimisation. Furthermore, the shelters themselves have improved their public information services, which, according to the National Institute for Health and Welfare, has led to an increased number of events and reports in local newspapers, on the radio and in social media since the end of 2018. This campaign was launched after a 2018 survey of victims of domestic violence indicated that while they were very satisfied with the shelters (4.7 out of 5 points); they nevertheless believed there would be considerable room for improvement in terms of information and awareness raising.⁷¹

3.9 Assessment

The uniform public coordination and monitoring of shelters means that the system is highly professional in regard to comprehensive, consistent quality standards for services – in contrast to the other specialist support services. As with the specialist support services for domestic violence, the FMS association, which runs 18 shelters, contributes to good networking of services, while also presenting its work very clearly and accessibly within the framework of the *Online Shelter*. Some FMS member organisations that offer other specialist support services relating to domestic violence also support women after they leave a shelter. However, the follow-up care is not regulated by the state in a consistent manner and is, like the other domestic violence services, a service provided by the FMS association. **GREVIO voices strong criticism that the number of services provided in this area is insufficient, which means that women have serious difficulties finding housing after leaving a shelter (GREVIO 2019: 31).**

It is noticeable that centralised control means the shelters provide identical services and describe them in these terms. The exclusive priority is domestic violence. Only one shelter has a specialised focus on migrant women. Apart from this one, all shelters are available to men and women, although 94 percent of people seeking protection are women. **In its evaluation, GREVIO notes**

⁶⁹ <https://www.essote.fi/>

⁷⁰ <http://www.paakaupunginturvakoti.fi/> und <http://www.tetuko.fi/>

⁷¹ Information from the National Institute for Health and Welfare dated February 2019: https://thl.fi/en/web/thlfi-en/-/clients-feel-safe-in-shelters-for-victims-of-domestic-violence?redirect=https%20Prozent3A%20Prozent2F%20Prozent2Fthl.fi%20Prozent2Fen%20Prozent2Fweb%20Prozent2Fthlfi-en%20Prozent2Fmain-page%20Prozent3Fp_p_id%20Prozent3D101_INSTANCE_Hqr7tiX0hzzV%20Prozent26p_p_lifecycle%20Prozent3D0%20Prozent26p_p_state%20Prozent3Dnormal

that the gender-based nature of these forms of violence must be recognised and that Finland should hence provide protected spaces for women only (GREVIO 2019: 34).

The essentially well-developed and organised nationwide shelter system could be used to address other forms of specialised violence, for example stalking, violence in the name of so-called “honour” or forced marriage. This might close the current gaps in the support system in these areas, or supplement the narrow range on offer to make this form of assistance more widely available. According to the country report, some civil-society organisations also complain that they are inadequately able to contribute their expertise and specialist experience due to cooperation with the state (Government of Finland 2018: 20). The pooling of expertise on forms of violence that go beyond domestic violence must therefore be promoted more effectively.

Although the system seems to function very well, it does not fulfil the recommendations of the Istanbul Convention, as the required number of places in shelters has not been reached:

Finland would have to increase its allocation of 202 places by another 352 in order to meet the Istanbul Convention’s recommendation for one family place per 10,000 head of population.⁷²

Evaluation of the data from the statistical reports by the National Institute for Health and Welfare shows that over half of all people seeking protection⁷³ in Finland come from the region of southern Finland. While the number of places in this region has been increased steadily, the trend towards higher utilisation rates and the high rejection rate indicates that demand is actually far higher. Ranging between 88 and 92 percent, the civil-society organisations in Helsinki in particular show the highest utilisation rates in Finland. It is noticeable that the three shelters run by the local authorities in south Finland are utilised significantly less (2018: 42 percent) and, in consequence exhibit a very low rejection rate (2018: 2.5 percent). The data plainly shows that the number of available places must be increased in order to meet the demand from victims, especially in the region of southern Finland. The FMS calls for an increase to 500 places.⁷⁴

⁷² This is based on the Finnish population of 5.54 million in 2019.

⁷³ Rejected and accepted

⁷⁴ https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/increase_in_womens_shelters_insufficient_says_organisation/10668434

4 Support for victims of sexual violence (Article 25)

“Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to provide for the setting up of appropriate, easily accessible rape crisis or sexual violence referral centres for victims in sufficient numbers to provide for medical and forensic examination, trauma support and counselling for victims.”

(Article 25 IC)

The Istanbul Convention distinguishes between sexual violence referral centres that offer immediate support, especially by providing medical treatment for victims and the gathering of forensic evidence, and rape crisis centres that offer support in the longer term, especially in the form of psychological counselling and legal assistance. However, the States Parties are not instructed to establish both forms of crisis centres (CoE 2011: 26).

As mentioned in the beginning (refer to the [Excursus: Nordic paradox](#)), sexual violence is a major problem in Finland and its Scandinavian neighbouring countries.

According to figures from *Statistics Finland*, a total of 1,338 rapes were reported in 2018, 7.5 percent more than in 2017. Moreover, 529 cases of sexual harassment were reported in total during 2018, which represents an increase of 27.8 percent compared to the previous year.⁷⁵

Strong criticism has been levelled at the criminal statutes on rape for many years.⁷⁶ Amnesty International comments highly critical on the provisions of national criminal law (AI 2019a: 17 ff), the whole legal process (ibid.: 47ff) and the poor accessibility of support in the form of crisis centres (ibid.: 55). Contrary to the promises of politicians, Amnesty International has noted that change has still to take place (cf. AI 2019a).

4.1 Sexual violence referral centres for victims of sexual violence

At the time of research for this working paper, there was one **Sexual Assault Support Center (Seri Support Center)** in Helsinki⁷⁷ as contact point for victims of sexual violence in Finland that can be classified as a sexual violence referral centre within the meaning of the Istanbul Convention. In February 2020, another Seri Support Center in Turku⁷⁸ opened. Therefore, the

⁷⁵ Information from *Statistics Finland*, January 2019: https://www.stat.fi/til/rpk/2018/04/rpk_2018_04_2019-01-17_tie_001_en.html.

⁷⁶ In recent years, Finland has amended some provisions of its criminal law and expanded what constitutes rape. Nonetheless, Finnish law still inherently links rape to either the application or the threat of violence or the state of helplessness. Amnesty International criticises this and calls for the legal definition of rape to be aligned with the internationally approved practice of placing the person's consent at the heart of the definition. (AI 2019b)

⁷⁷ <https://www.hus.fi/en/medical-care/hospitals/womens-hospital/ambulatory-clinics/Pages/Seri-Support-Center.aspx>

⁷⁸ <http://www.vsshp.fi/en/toimipaikat/tyks/to7/Seri-keskus/Pages/default.aspx>

number of sexual referral centres was updated to two for the overview. However, the following description focuses only on the Seri Support Center in Helsinki.

4.1.1 Services

The **Seri Support Centers** are state-run contact points for victims of sexual violence and are run by the National Institute for Health and Welfare in cooperation with university clinics. The Seri Support Center in Helsinki officially opened in 2017.⁷⁹ The centre offers the following services:

- Medical care and gathering of forensic evidence
- Psychological support
- Development of a future treatment plan
- 24/7 telephone counselling
- Support in reporting the crime to the police (not compulsory – only on the wishes of the victim)
- Referral to external agencies for further support

4.1.2 Funding and bases

The **Seri Support Centers** are funded from the budget of the Ministry for Health and Social Affairs.

4.1.3 Standards

It was not possible to identify specific standards for the **Seri Support Center** Helsinki. Multiple civil-society organisations have developed general standards for legal and educational professionals (refer to [Chapter 4.2.3](#)).

4.1.4 Distribution

The **Seri Support Center** Helsinki caters to the regions of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa. According to the 2018–2021 Istanbul Convention Action Plan, the network of Seri Support Centers for victims of sex offences is to be expanded to include all university clinics, initially in Turku and Tampere, followed by Kuopio and Oulu (NAPE 2017: 23). Press reports indicate that the centres in Kuopio, Tampere and Turku should be open since the end of 2019, another centre in Oulu in February 2020.⁸⁰ It was not possible to obtain information confirming these dates.

4.1.5 Availability

The **Seri Support Center** Helsinki employs one full-time midwife and one psychologist, as well as a part-time social worker and doctor. It is open on weekdays between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm. Telephone counselling is also offered free of charge 24/7.

4.1.6 Access

The **Seri Support Center** Helsinki accepts people of any gender above the age of 16. According to a statistical report by the National Institute for Health and Welfare on the subject of domestic

⁷⁹ https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/finland_last_among_nordics_to_set_up_centre_for_victims_of_sexual_violence/9637730

⁸⁰ <https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/17245-over-1-000-have-sought-help-from-centre-for-sexual-assault-victims-in-helsinki.html>

violence, 97 percent of people who approached the Seri Support Center in 2017 were female (THL 2018).

In a report from 2019, Amnesty International adds that victims are only accepted if less than one month has elapsed since their sexual assault, and is critical of the high utilisation, which makes it very difficult in general to obtain support (AI 2019a: 48). The Seri Support Center tracks the health status of the people it treats for up to six months after their visit (AI 2019a: 39).

4.2. Rape crisis centres for victims of sexual violence

In addition to the state support services provided by the sexual violence referral centre, there is a major civil-society organisation, the **Rape Crisis Centre Tukunainen (Raiskauskriisikeskus Tukunainen)**⁸¹ that offers specialist support services to victims of sexual violence. All of these services fall under the category of rape crisis centres as defined in the Istanbul Convention.

Many of the **FMS member organisations** point out that domestic violence can also mean sexual violence. As part of its support for victims of domestic violence, the Jakobstad shelter⁸², for example, also offers support groups and individual assistance relating to rape or sexual harassment. The membership organisation VIOLA – *Free from Violence* has developed, in partnership with the municipality of Mikkeli, a prevention programme (**My Space, Not Yours!**)⁸³ for sexual violence (refer to Chapter 4.2.3). As a rule, individual measures taken by the FMS member organisations that are linked to sexual violence are mentioned within the range of services for victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence is prioritised in this regard, which is why the services are described in more detail under this point (refer to Chapter 2.1).

4.2.1 Services

The **Rape Crisis Centre Tukunainen** in Helsinki is a national, non-governmental support centre for victims of sexual violence and their families. It offers the following services:

- On-site counselling
- Telephone counselling for persons affected by sexual violence and information on personal and group appointments
- Appointments with lawyers on-site⁸⁴
- Legal counselling by telephone
- Appointment with a sex therapist (up to five sessions are possible)
- Organisation of self-help groups
- Online service *Nettitukunainen*, anonymous, online assistance for victims of sexual violence⁸⁵
- Training for professionals and government agencies: Senja programme

⁸¹ <https://tukunainen.fi/>

⁸² <https://www.kvinnojouren.fi/>

⁸³ <http://www.violary.fi/myspace/>

⁸⁴ Victims of sexual violence are entitled to free legal representation. The *Tukunainen Rape Crisis Centre* also states that victims have the right to support throughout the entire legal process. This applies even if the person is only being examined as a witness: <https://tukunainen.fi/oikeus-oikeudenkayntiavustajaan-ja-tukihenkiloon/>

⁸⁵ <https://www.nettitukunainen.fi/>

4.2.2 Funding and bases

The **Tukinainen Rape Crisis Center** obtains its funding from the STEA budget (*Veikkaus*), as well as from donations. The Senja programme for training professionals and government agencies is developed by the Tukinainen Center and funded by STEA (*Veikkaus*) and the Ministry of Justice. The project “**My Space, Not Yours!**” was also financed by STEA (*Veikkaus*).

4.2.3 Standards

As part of its **Senja programme (Sensitiveness Model for Professionals of Jurisprudence)**⁸⁶, the Tukinainen Rape Crisis Centre offers information for legal professionals and the police on the subjects of trauma, sexual offences, domestic violence, victims with disabilities or migratory backgrounds and very young victims. All of these skills are taught in a course programme for professionals.

The project **My Space, Not Yours!** is run in partnership between the FMS member organisation *VIOLA – Free from Violence* and the municipality of Mikkeli. The project aims primarily to prevent sexual violence. Teaching methods for secondary schools were developed together with the youth services, trained professionals, schoolchildren and students. A pilot project was organised to include the teaching unit in the curriculum of every level 2 secondary school in Mikkeli, and suitable training was provided to the educational staff. The project ran from 2015 to May 2019. The materials developed are freely available to experts.

4.2.4 Distribution

The main office of the **Rape Crisis Centre Tukinainen** is located in Helsinki. There are two regional sites in Jyväskylä (region of western and central Finland) and Rovaniemi (region of north Finland). However, the self-help groups can be organised anywhere in Finland. The Statistical Report for 2017 shows that the telephone service for legal counselling is used by people all over Finland. Accounting for 48 percent, the lion’s share of calls did come from the southern Finnish region of Uusiuma, in which the capital Helsinki is also located (Tukinainen, n. y.: 4).

4.2.5 Availability

The website of the **Rape Crisis Centre Tukinainen** informs visitors of the telephone service for legal and general counselling. In 2017, the telephone service for legal counselling offered by the Rape Crisis Centre Tukinainen was contacted by the victim in 68 percent of cases, by a government agency in 12 percent of cases and by parents or people from the social milieu in 11 percent of cases (Tukinainen, n. y.: 5).

4.2.6 Access

Victims of sexual violence can obtain rapid assistance by contacting the online service *Nettitukinainen*.

⁸⁶ <https://senjanetti.fi/en>

4.3 Assessment

The range of specialist support services for victims of sexual violence is significantly narrower than in the areas of shelters and domestic violence. Hence, Finland does not fulfil the recommendations of the Istanbul Convention to create one centre per 200,000 head of population:

In total, there are five rape crisis and sexual violence referral centres⁸⁷ for women affected by sexual violence per 200,000 head of population. In order to fulfil the recommendation of the Istanbul Convention, there would have to be 28 – i.e., Finland is 23 places short.

Of the existing services, the civil-society organisation *Tukinainen* is particularly active and offers a broad, accessible range of services at multiple locations in Finland.

The announcement that more *Seri Support Centres* will be opened to supplement the existing centres at Helsinki and Turku university clinics demonstrates the political will to expand the services. Nonetheless, the number of centres is insufficient. There is indeed an urgent need for action in this area, especially in view of the high figures for sexual violence and harassment in Finland, as mentioned earlier. The information provided by the *Seri Support Center Helsinki* does not adequately describe the conditions for access. According to Amnesty International, the centre is only responsible for victims aged over 16 for a period of one month following the incident (AI 2019a: 48). This would mean an enormous restriction on access to help. [The GREVIO evaluation also criticises this access barrier. According to data available to GREVIO, the great majority of victims are referred to the centre within three days. This means that access is not assured for victims who need help after a longer period. \(GREVIO 2019: 35\)](#)

Both crisis centres offer psychological help. However, the *Seri Support Center Helsinki* only employs one psychologist, and it was not possible to determine this person's specialist field. The *Tukinainen Rape Crisis Centre* offers victims up to five sessions with trained sex therapists.

The opening of additional crisis centres is necessary as a matter of urgency in light of the low admission capacity of the two crisis centres and the inadequate care for victims of sexual violence in all parts of the country. It is reasonable to assume that many victims turn to other support services due to the low availability of specialist support services dealing with sexual violence. Some member organisations of the *Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters (FMS)* do provide information to the effect that domestic violence can also include sexual violence. Hence, an expansion of specialised care for victims of sexual violence could ease the pressure on these services.

⁸⁷ Besides the four centres, there are some individual services that address sexual violence within the context of domestic violence. Although they were presented in this chapter, they have not been evaluated as dedicated centres within the meaning of the Istanbul Convention.

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⁸⁸ All internet sources are currently available [16/06/2020].

6 Annex

I. Link list

a. General

- EIGE – European Institute for Gender Equality, Gender Equality Index: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2015>
- End FGM European Network: <https://www.endfgm.eu/>
- FRA – EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (2012): Survey on gender-specific violence against women: <https://fra.europa.eu/de/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/gewalt-gegen-frauen-eine-eu-weite-erhebung>
- UN Women – Global Database on Violence against Women: <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/>
- WAVE – Women Against Violence Europe: <https://www.wave-network.org/>

b. Finland

- Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters (FMS, Ensi- ja turvakotien liitto): <https://ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi/en>
- FLHR – Finnish League for Human Rights: <https://ihmisoikeusliitto.fi/english/>
- KoKoNainen Project for Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation: <https://ihmisoikeusliitto.fi/english/female-genital-mutilation/>
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö): <https://stm.fi/en/combating-domestic-violence>
- Multicultural Women’s Association Finland (MONIKA), also operates the shelter MONA: <https://monikanaiset.fi/en/>
- National Council for Crime Prevention, for information on the MARAC Method: <https://rikoksantorjunta.fi/en/marac>
- National Institute for Health and Welfare (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos): <https://thl.fi/en/web/gender-equality/gender-equality-in-finland/wellbeing/gender-based-violence>
- Online Shelter der Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters (FMS): <https://nettiturvakoti.fi/en>
- Rape Crisis Centre Tukinainen (Raiskauskriisikeskus Tukinainen): <https://tukinainen.fi/>
- Senja – Sensitiveness Model for Professionals of Jurisprudence: <https://senjanetti.fi/en>
- Sexual Assault Support Center (Seri Support Center Helsinki): <https://www.hus.fi/en/medical-care/hospitals/womens-hospital/outpatient-clinics/Pages/Seri-Support-Center.aspx>

- SOPU Project against Violence in the Name of So-Called “Honour”: <https://soputila.fi/en>
- Varjo Support Center – Centre for Post-Relationship Stalking: <https://varjosta.fi/tukikeskus-varjo/>
- VIOLA – Free from Violence (member of FMS): <http://www.violary.fi/in-english/>, delivers “My Space, Not Yours!” programme on sexual violence: <http://www.violary.fi/myspace/>

II. List of FMS member organisations and their areas of activity⁸⁹

| Name und Region | Shelter (Art. 23) | Specialist support services (Art. 22) |
|---|----------------------|---|
| Äidit irti synnyttymasennuksesta ÄIMÄ ry Southern Finland | none | no services or information |
| Etelä-Karjalan perhetyön kehittämisyhdistys ry Southern Finland | none | Crisis support for victims and perpetrators in cases of domestic violence |
| Etelä-Pohjanmaan Ensi- ja turvakotiyhdistys ry West/central Finland | 1 | Crisis counselling in cases of domestic violence and custody, emergency flat available for cases of acute crisis |
| Helsingin ensikoti ry Southern Finland | none | no services or information |
| Kaapatut Lapset ry Southern Finland | none | no services or information |
| Kanta-Hämeen perhetyö ry Southern Finland | 1 | “Violence working group” for instances of actual or threatened violence |
| Keski-Suomen ensi- ja turvakoti ry West/central Finland | 2 | “Violence counselling centre”, practical support with injunctions or reporting crimes |
| Kokkolan ensi- ja turvakoti ry West/central Finland | 1 | “Department for crises and violence”, workshops and individual-, group- or couples-based work |
| Kuopion Ensikotiyhdistys ry Eastern Finland | none | Crisis counselling for cases of family-based violence |
| Kvinnohusföreningen i Jakobstadsnejden rf West/central Finland | none | Accommodation and ambulatory support, crisis meetings for children, support in the event of rape or sexual harassment |
| Kymenlaakson Ensi- ja turvakotiyhdistys ry | none | Two counselling centres, support in cases of violence in the family or partnership |

⁸⁹ The list of member organisations of the Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters (Ensi- ja turvakotien liitto, FMS) was taken from the FMS website: <https://ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi/tietoa-liitosta/jasenyhdistykset/>. All other information was taken from the individual websites of the member organisations: The organisation names are hyperlinks to the relevant websites. The allocation to regions was based on the categorisation by the National Institute for Health and Welfare: <https://thl.fi/fi/palvelut-jasiointi/valtion-sosiaali-ja-terveydenhuollon-erityispalvelut/turvakotipalvelut/turvakodit/turvakotien-yhteystiedot>. For more information on the shelters operated by the member organisations, see table in Annex IV.

| Name und Region | Shelter (Art. 23) | Specialist support services (Art. 22) |
|---|----------------------|---|
| Southern Finland | | |
| Lahden ensi- ja turvakoti ry Southern Finland | 1 | Crisis work in conversation and 24-hour crisis telephone line, therapy service for violent men |
| Lapin ensi- ja turvakoti ry Northern Finland | 1 | Crisis centre for people with traumatic experiences, CrisisChat and telephone counselling |
| Lapsen Kengissä ry Eastern Finland | none | Open services provided according to the website. No contact details or services identifiable |
| Lyömätön Linja Espoossa ry Southern Finland | none | Contact person available on the subject of domestic violence, no specific services |
| Oulun ensi- ja turvakoti ry Northern Finland | 1 | “Department for domestic violence and intimate partner violence”, counselling, peer support groups |
| Pääkaupungin turvakoti ry Southern Finland | 3 | “Department for domestic violence” for women affected by violence (or perpetrators), support for children aged 4–18, housing unit in Helsinki and 18 transitional flats |
| Paasikiven Nuorisokylän Säätiö Southern Finland | none | Counselling in cases of domestic violence and intimate partner violence, interpreters available on request |
| Perheidenpaikka ry Eastern Finland | none | Family flat for violence-related emergencies, €50 per day for adults, €20 per day for children, free for babies |
| Pienperheyhdistys ry Southern Finland | none | No service offered, but link to <i>Online Shelter</i> |
| Porin ensi- ja turvakotiyhdistys ry South/west Finland | 1 | Contact person for people affected by violence, no specific service offered |
| Raahen ensi- ja turvakoti ry Northern Finland | 1 | Counselling centre, support in applying for a flat or injunction |
| Tampereen ensi- ja turvakoti ry West/central Finland | 2 | Support during transition from shelter into everyday life, open service for work dealing with violence, support for children in the age groups 0–3 and 3–17 who have experienced violence along with their parent |
| Turun ensi- ja turvakoti ry South/west Finland | 1 | Support centre for people affected by partner violence and domestic violence, support for children who been exposed to violence |

| Name und Region | Shelter (Art. 23) | Specialist support services (Art. 22) |
|---|----------------------|---|
| Turvallisen vanhuuden puolesta – Suvanto ry Southern Finland | none | Violence against older people, support helpline and legal representation |
| Vaasan ensi- ja turvakoti West/central Finland | 1 | Counselling for people affected by domestic violence and specifically intimate partner violence; for victims and perpetrators |
| Vantaan Turvakoti ry Southern Finland | 1 | Department for violence with five contact persons; all parties to domestic violence and intimate partner violence; special counselling for children |
| VIOLA – väkivallasta vapaaksi ry Eastern Finland | none | Counselling centre dealing with domestic violence for victims and perpetrators; peer support groups |
| Vuoksenlaakson vammais- ja perhetyö ry Southern Finland | none | No service offered, but link to <i>Online Shelter</i> |
| Ylä-Savon Ensi- ja turvakotiyhdistys ry Eastern Finland | none | No services or information |

III. Overview table of shelters in Finland⁹⁰

| Name | Operated by | City | Number of places | | | Utilisation | | Refusal | | People seeking protection | | Rejection rate | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|------|------|-------------|-------|---------|------|---------------------------|------|----------------|------|
| | | | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 |
| Etelä-Pohjanmaan turvakoti | FMS | Seinäjoki | | 7 | 7 | | 38.0% | | 0 | | 130 | | 0% |
| Hämeenlinnan turvakoti (Kanta-Hämeen) | FMS | Hämeenlinna | | 7 | 7 | | 75.0% | | 22 | | 106 | | 17% |
| Keski-Suomen ensi- ja turvakotiry | FMS | Äänekoski | | | 7 | | | | | | | | |
| Keski-Suomen ensi- ja turvakotiry | FMS | Jyväskylä | 5 | 5 | 7 | 92.0% | 87.0% | 193 | 140 | 195 | 187 | 50% | 43% |
| Kokkolan ensi- ja turvakotiry | FMS | Kokkola | 5 | 5 | 5 | 31.0% | 55.0% | 0 | 10 | 135 | 161 | 0% | 6% |

⁹⁰ The list of shelters, number of places, people seeking protection, rejection rate and utilisation were taken from the statistical reports of 2017 and 2018 by the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL 2018; THL 2019). The rejection rate was calculated as follows: Number of rejections / total number of people seeking protection (accepted and rejected). There is only a list of all shelters and their available places for 2019. This is based on forecasts from the statistical report from 2018. Where shelters did not open until 2018 or 2019, the fields for previous years are left empty. The organisations operating the shelters were categorised as 1. Civil-society organisations that are members of the Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters (FMS), 2. Other civil-society organisations (NGOs) and 3. Local authorities.

| Name | Operated by | City | Number of places | | | Utilisation | | Refusal | | People seeking protection | | Rejection rate | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------------|------|------|-------------|-------|---------|------|---------------------------|------|----------------|------|
| | | | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 |
| Lahden ensi- ja turvakoti ry | FMS | Lahti | 5 | 5 | 5 | 70.0% | 57.0% | 124 | 98 | 228 | 238 | 35% | 29% |
| Lapin ensi- ja turvakoti ry | FMS | Rovaniemi | 7 | 7 | 7 | 35.0% | 33.0% | 0 | 0 | 173 | 120 | 0% | 0% |
| Oulun ensi- ja turvakoti ry | FMS | Oulu | 8 | 8 | 8 | 65.0% | 79.0% | 29 | 74 | 365 | 388 | 7% | 16% |
| Pääkaupungin turvakoti ry | FMS | Helsinki | 11 | 11 | 11 | 88.0% | 90.0% | 326 | 285 | 374 | 376 | 47% | 43% |
| Pääkaupungin turvakoti ry | FMS | Espoo | | 7 | 7 | | 88.0% | | 149 | | 153 | | 49% |
| Pääkaupungin turvakoti ry | FMS | Helsinki | 7 | 7 | 7 | 87.0% | 93.0% | 116 | 198 | 86 | 184 | 57% | 52% |
| Porin ensi- ja turvakoti ry | FMS | Pori | 7 | 7 | 7 | 41.0% | 51.0% | 0 | 0 | 183 | 199 | 0% | 0% |
| Raahen ensi- ja turvakoti ry | FMS | Raahe | 5 | 5 | 5 | 25.0% | 17.0% | 1 | 0 | 72 | 82 | 1% | 0% |
| Tampereen ensi- ja turvakoti ry | FMS | Tampere | | 9 | 9 | | 73.0% | | 30 | | 277 | | 10% |
| Tampereen ensi- ja turvakoti ry | FMS | Tampere | 8 | 8 | 8 | 89.0% | 82.0% | 245 | 125 | 288 | 297 | 46% | 30% |

| Name | Operated by | City | Number of places | | | Utilisation | | Refusal | | People seeking protection | | Rejection rate | |
|---|-----------------|------------|------------------|------|------|-------------|-------|---------|------|---------------------------|------|----------------|------|
| | | | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 |
| Turun ensi- ja turvakoti ry | FMS | Turku | 7 | 10 | 10 | 65.0% | 49.0% | 33 | 19 | 263 | 318 | 11% | 6% |
| Vaasan ensi- ja turvakoti ry | FMS | Vaasa | 5 | 6 | 6 | 56.0% | 26.0% | 0 | 0 | 197 | 148 | 0% | 0% |
| Vantaan turvakoti ry | FMS | Vantaa | 8 | 8 | 14 | 85.0% | 89.0% | 355 | 257 | 264 | 247 | 57% | 51% |
| Sophie Mannerheimin turvakoti | NGO | Helsinki | 7 | 7 | 7 | 86.0% | 92.0% | 72 | 180 | 161 | 235 | 31% | 43% |
| Turvakoti Mona | NGO | Helsinki | 10 | 10 | 14 | 85.0% | 88.0% | 134 | 157 | 264 | 235 | 34% | 40% |
| Villa Familia | NGO | Raasepori | 4 | 4 | 4 | 60.0% | 56.0% | 53 | 51 | 99 | 100 | 35% | 34% |
| Etelä-Karjalan sosiaali- ja terveystoiminta (Eksoten) | Local authority | Imatra | 4 | 4 | 4 | 29.0% | 32.0% | 0 | 2 | 61 | 78 | 0% | 3% |
| Kainuun turvakoti (Oulu) | Local authority | Salmijärvi | 1 | 1 | 1 | 39.0% | 68.0% | 9 | 28 | 18 | 26 | 33% | 52% |
| Kotkan turvakoti/Villa Jensen | Local authority | Kotka | 3 | 3 | 7 | 46.0% | 44.0% | 0 | 0 | 120 | 87 | 0% | 0% |

| Name | Operated by | City | Number of places | | | Utilisation | | Refusal | | People seeking protection | | Rejection rate | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------|------------------|------|------|-------------|-------|---------|------|---------------------------|------|----------------|------|
| | | | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 |
| Kuopion turvakoti | Local authority | Kuopio | 5 | 5 | 5 | 79.0% | 77.0% | 8 | 64 | 214 | 169 | 4% | 27% |
| Mikkelin turvakoti (Essoten) | Local authority | Mikkeli | 7 | 7 | 7 | 32.0% | 32.0% | 0 | 0 | 197 | 130 | 0% | 0% |
| Porvoon kaupungin turvakoti | Local authority | Porvoo | 7 | 9 | 9 | 67.0% | 50.0% | 25 | 8 | 202 | 218 | 11% | 4% |
| Siun Soten turvakoti | Local authority | Joensuu | 7 | 7 | 7 | 54.0% | 49.0% | 0 | 8 | 162 | 174 | 0% | 4% |



Current Publications

- Wittenius, Marie (2020): [Perspectives on the new LGBTI strategy announced by the European Commission](#), Newsletter No. 1/2020.
- Schliffka, Christina (2020): [Demographic change in border regions – Cross-border cooperation to safeguard services of general interest](#), Working Paper No. 20.
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- Molter, Sarah / Schliffka, Christina (2019): [Growing up with good opportunities – How can state support reach all children and families?](#) Newsletter No. 1/2019.
- Gärtner, Debora / Reinschmidt, Lena (2019): [Farewell to the supplementary-earner model – but where to now? Aims and requirements of reconciliation policy from a gender equality perspective](#). Documentation of the European Expert Meeting on 1 and 2 October 2018 in Berlin.
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**Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments
in Europe**

Main Office: Zeilweg 42, D-60439 Frankfurt a. M.
+49 (0) 69 - 95 789-0

Berlin Office: Lahnstraße 19, 12055 Berlin
+49 (0)30 - 616 717 9-0

beobachtungsstelle@iss-ffm.de

<http://www.iss-ffm.de>

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Authors

Marie Wittenius: marie.wittenius@iss-ffm.de

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Toptranslation GmbH: clients@toptranslation.com

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