



MARVOW^{2.0}

Coordinated Multi-Agency Response
to Violence against Older Women



Unseen no more!

Policies and partnerships to protect
older women from violence

Violence against older women
has long remained invisible – but not anymore.

Conference Report



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Unseen No More: European Stakeholders Unite to Protect Older Women from Violence

On 3 February 2026, the MARVOW 2.0 project brought together policymakers, practitioners, and civil society organisations in Brussels for the conference “Unseen no more: Policies and Partnerships to Protect Older Women from Violence.” The event marked a significant milestone in Europe’s efforts to address a long-neglected issue: gender-based violence against older women.

A Call to Recognise the Invisible

Opening the conference, Alessandra Pauncz (WWP EN) and Lisa Collste (European Commission) underscored the urgent need to make older women visible in policy and practice. Both speakers shared powerful testimonies of older survivors whose decades of abuse went unnoticed or unsupported, illustrating how ageism and sexism combine to silence victims. Their message was clear: violence does not end with age, and support systems must evolve to meet the needs of older women.

MARVOW 2.0: Building a Coordinated Multi-Agency Response

Martina Knoll (Association of Autonomous Women’s Shelters in Austria) presented the achievements of MARVOW 2.0, a three-year EU-funded initiative uniting nine partners across seven countries. With nearly 30% of the EU population projected to be older persons by 2050, the project highlights the pressing need for age- and gender-sensitive responses.

Key project outcomes include:

- A Risk Assessment Checklist tailored to age-specific indicators of violence
- A comprehensive training programme delivered to over 400 professionals
- A multi-agency Manual of Operation supporting coordinated, victim-centred interventions

Apolline Parel (AGE Platform Europe), presented the Marvow 2.0 policy recommendations urging for the inclusion of older women in data collection, applying an intersectional perspective and the adoption of an EU Action Plan to Combat Ageism to strengthen a human-rights based approach.

Policy Perspectives: Strengthening Europe’s Framework

A high-level panel featuring Evin Incir (European Parliament), José Antonio Moreno Díaz (European Economic and Social Committee), and Lisa Collste (European Commission) explored how EU directives,

strategies, and the Istanbul Convention can better protect older women. Speakers highlighted the 2024 Directive on Combating Violence Against Women as a crucial tool for improving data collection, multi-agency cooperation, and recognition of older women as a group at increased risk.

Despite progress, political resistance and persistent stereotypes continue to hinder implementation. The panel called for stronger enforcement, dedicated funding, and training for professionals across health, justice, and social care sectors.

Civil Society Voices: Intersectionality at the Centre

Representatives from the European Disability Forum, Mental Health Europe, WWP EN, and the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community stressed the importance of addressing the diverse realities of older women. They highlighted:

- Violence in institutional and care settings
- The invisibility of older LGBTIQ women
- The lack of specialised perpetrator programmes
- Barriers linked to disability, mental health, and lifelong discrimination

Speakers urged the EU to improve data collection for women aged 75+ and ensure meaningful involvement of civil society in policy design.

From Risk to Response: Tools for Professionals

Marvow 2.0 project partners Psytel, Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies, and Union of Women Associations of Heraklion showcased MARVOW 2.0's practical tools for frontline workers. These include an age-specific risk checklist, training modules co-created with practitioners, and a multi-agency manual of operations. Pilot experiences revealed the importance of cross-sector collaboration, burnout prevention, and clear protocols for supporting older victims and addressing older perpetrators.

Lessons from Practice: Bulgaria, Italy, Spain

Despite persistent gaps between ageing and gender-based violence policies, in comprehensive stakeholder involvement, and long-term housing solutions, countries demonstrated impactful progress:

- In Bulgaria, local cooperation has been strengthened and violence against older women gained significant media attention.
- In Italy, Marvow 2.0 results will be integrated into the Roman anti-violence network including specific provisions for older women.
- In Spain, multi-agency collaboration was improved through the inclusion of public services for older people and Barcelona's 2025–2030 gender-based violence plan specifically mentions older people.

A Shared Commitment

Closing the event, moderator Alessandra Pauncz called on EU Institutions and Member States to invest in tailored prevention, specialised services, and sustainable multi-agency systems. She emphasised that MARVOW 2.0 provides concrete tools to drive lasting change and that older women must no longer remain unseen.