Daphne programme: achievements and future prospects

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The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopted the report by Regina BASTOS (EPP, PT) on the Daphne programme: achievements and future prospects.

Members recall that the Daphne programme has been a genuine success since its launch in 1997 and is to this day the only programme of this type that aims to combat violence against women, children and young people across the European Union as a whole.

The report also recalls that the costs to society of domestic violence are extremely high. Conjugal violence alone costs EUR 16 billion per year within the European Union – this includes all direct medical costs (casualty services, hospitalisation, out-patient care, medicines), court and police costs, welfare costs (accommodation and various forms of assistance) and economic costs (lost output). Various studies on gender-based violence estimate that one fifth to one quarter of all women in Europe have experienced physical acts of violence at least once during their adult lives, and that more than one tenth have suffered sexual violence involving the use of force. Research also shows that 26% of children and young people report physical violence in childhood.

While noting that the Daphne programme will from 2014 be incorporated in the Rights and Citizenship programme, Members consider it essential to see the programme's objectives, in particular that of **combating violence against women**, retained in the 2014-2020 period among the objectives of the new Rights and Citizenship Programme, and maintain that its funding must be held at a level comparable to that of the earlier programme.

The committee regrets that combating violence against children, teenagers and women is not explicitly mentioned in Article 4 ('Specific objectives') of the text contained in the Commission communication on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing for the period 2014 to 2020 the Rights and Citizenship Programme.

Highlighting the few problems set out in the 'Report on the interim evaluation of the 'Daphne III programme 2007–2013' (COM(2011)0254), Members ask the Commission to find solutions to the small number of problems highlighted in the interim report, notably with regard to:

- avoidance of overlap with other Community programmes in order to escape the risk of de-prioritising DAPHNE issues,
- improving the programmes' transparency and the dissemination of their results,
- spreading the programmes more evenly across the Member States,
- easing the administrative burden, simplifying grant application procedures and shortening the time between the publication of calls for projects and the conclusion of contracts, which has prevented many small NGOs from proposing DAPHNE projects;
- enhancing the effectiveness of operating grants to European organisations capable of consolidating multidisciplinary Europe-wide partnerships established for subsidisation purposes;
- strengthening the ability of NGOs to define and influence national and European policy, with particular reference to smaller NGOs in central and eastern European countries.

In order to **strengthen the impact of the programme**, the Commission is called upon to:

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pay further special attention to women, children and young people who, because of social exclusion and marginalisation, are particularly exposed to the risk of violence;

- include candidate countries within the scope of eligibility for funds under the Daphne III Programme;
- channel more funding into projects aimed at alerting the young in particular to new forms of violence linked to the growing use of online social networks (threats, psychological pressures, bullying, internet child pornography), which are more insidious than other forms of violence, but just as likely to cause physical or mental injury;
- pay particular attention to projects aimed at eradicating ´**honour**´ **crimes** and female genital mutilation;
- allow the funding of **national projects involving small nonprofit organisations**, so that in the future it will still be possible for a large number of small NGOs to be fully involved and supported in partnerships of associations;
- develop on its website user-friendly special pages given over exclusively to the Daphne programme and, from 2014, to the Rights and Citizenship Programme projects designed to fight violence towards women, children and teenagers;
- make it possible still to identify projects relating to the objectives of the Daphne programme, which is widely known, so as to keep the programme's profile as high as possible;
- broaden the role of the Justice DG's Daphne team, moving beyond administrative and financial control duties to encompass a more specific communicating role;
- capitalise on the outcome of projects in order to influence European and national policies aimed at preventing and combating violence against women, children, and young people;
- pay particular attention to applications relating to projects aimed at promoting gender equality from the earliest time of life, focusing on prevention and education in order to change attitudes and eradicate stereotypes.