

## **Local Network for the Prevention of Conjugal Violence, City of Liège**

### **Short description of the project :**

#### **1. A working spirit: permanent consultation**

Since 2002, the technical group “Violences conjugales” – which is connected with the “Aide aux victimes” Workshop of the Municipal Consultative Council for Prevention and Security – has been regularly summoning to meetings the actors belonging to the local associations which deal with this set of themes, the Local Police, the Justice Department as well as the City of Liège.

#### **2. Significant progress**

Since then, considerable progress has been recorded in Liège as regards dealing with the victims and offenders.

Early in 2002, the Liège Local Police Area had put the fight against conjugal violence down on its list of priorities as one of the six fields of action in the framework of its Area Security Plan. Reference agents have been appointed in each precinct station. Being strongly sensitized to the importance and the urgency of changing the repressive practices with regard to this phenomenon of violence, the Department of Public Prosecution appointed as early as 2002 a Reference Magistrate for matters of conjugal violence.

Since 2004, the Liège Public Prosecutor’s Office has adopted an innovative “Zero Tolerance” policy towards occurrences of conjugal violence, a policy which has gained the entire sector’s full support.

Since 2006, this Liège-initiated “Zero Tolerance” policy is being applied on a nationwide scale by the Minister of Justice.

#### **3. Effective prevention campaigns**

The members of the technical group have been able to join together to provide the population with clear messages concerning the conveyed values (violence is unacceptable) as well as useful information for the victims and offenders.

In 2003, a prevention campaign was therefore carried out, focusing on the “potential offenders,” trying to reach them even before they commit an act of violence.

After this prevention campaign which was carried out for a period of 3 weeks, 33 men spontaneously asked the PRAXIS association for support.

The consultations in Liège have led to the significant development of this association’s activities. Today, it succeeds in providing voluntary support to the offenders who are willing to be able to no longer resort to committing acts of violence.

In 2004, a more standard campaign reminded the victims which local service they could call in if needed.

#### **4. Large-scale campaign to raise public awareness**

Since 2003, the Liège Police Area has contributed to the worldwide White Ribbon Campaign: “men talk to men about violence against women,” an initiative which lies within the framework of a pioneer approach in Belgium.

In early 2004, the Police was reinforced by the City for the organization of this campaign. Voluntary male officials aim at making their colleagues aware of the importance to say “no” to every form of violence against women throughout the world.

In 2005, the members of the technical group set up a whole information stand together, for the public at large. This stand was presented at a big trade fair pertaining to the issue and the available resources.

The quality of these prevention campaigns is so largely appreciated that the concepts are systematically taken up and developed at provincial level.

#### 5. Work prospects

The synthetic, but exhaustive information folder for the professionals (doctors, hospitals, pharmacists, social workers, police officers,...) is being drawn up within the technical group.

Moreover, the thinking process has now begun on the appropriateness to try out the “Téléalarme” experience in Liège, such as carried out for several years in Ghent.