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## **European cooperation for prevention of elder abuse**

**The TISOVA (Training to Identify and Support Older Victims of Abuse) project, funded under the Erasmus+ element of the European Commission in years 2017-2020, will organise a partner meeting in Eurooppasali, Helsinki, Finland from Wednesday 12 September until Friday 14 September 2018. More than a dozen representatives from partner countries Finland, Estonia, Greece and Austria will take part in the meeting.**

The meeting is hosted by Empowering Old Age Coop VoiVa which is a Finnish specialist non-governmental organisation established in 2017. The coop provides adult education and consultation services particularly for the prevention of violence and abuse against older people.

The TISOVA project has its background in the European and global phenomenon of populations ageing. This phenomenon sets challenges for the sufficiency and quality of elderly care services. It has also been projected that elder abuse will increase as the number of those over 65 increases.

TISOVA is a transnational cooperation project of five organisations from Finland, Estonia, Greece and Austria. The project seeks to train employees and volunteers of senior centres as well as older people to identify and provide assistance for older victims of abuse. Within the interactive training programme, manual and online course developed as outcomes of the project, the main objective is to educate these key groups on violence perpetrated against older people, as well as on the experiences and specific needs of older female victims of abuse.

Elder abuse can be defined as a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person. According to prevalence studies conducted in Finland, 8-9% of women and 3-8% of men have experienced violence after retirement age. International studies have also shown that older women are particularly vulnerable to abuse occurring in home settings or close relationships. The AVOW study (2009-2011), coordinated in Finland by the National Institute for Health and Welfare concluded that as much as 28% of women over 60 years old have experienced abuse. As Europe's populations age, older women living at home will become the most vulnerable group to abuse.

The Northern service area of Helsinki city has been actively participating in the development work of the TISOVA project in Finland. The project steering group consists of representatives from various units of Kustaankartano and Syystie Comprehensive Service Centres. The TISOVA project has involved both professionals and older people in its activities. In January 2018 the Empowering Old Age Coop VoiVa organised a discussion event for the to the older people visiting the service centres. A group for older women met three times in spring 2018. The themes of the group meetings were independence, self-determination and the right to be heard. Four training events were held for social and health care professionals in different parts of the Helsinki Northern service area in spring 2018. 55 professionals from home care and other units of the service centres participated in these events.

As part of the partner meeting in Helsinki, the European project partners will also get the chance to visit Kustaankartano Comprehensive Service Centre and to learn more about elderly care in Finland.

### **For further details, please contact:**

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