

**the Independent Expert on the
enjoyment of all human rights by older
persons**

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Call for inputs: Violence, abuse and neglect against older persons – Prevalence rates of EAN in the Czech Republic

Dear Madam,

we welcome the longstanding interest of the Independent Expert in the topic of violence, abuse and neglect against older persons (EAN). This is very important topic touching the very foundation of the human rights and dignity, supporting broad idea of an age-friendly world without ageism.

We, as a research team of the project RESABUS would like to offer our support to the Independent Expert endeavours and share selected results of our recent prevalence study of elder abuse and neglect in the Czech Republic. The survey covers nationally representative sample of people aged 65 and older living in the community settings (N = 2 687; data collection Sept - Nov 2022).

According to the results of the RESTABUS study, the basic **prevalence** of the EAN phenomenon is **29%** (direct victims of violence; perpetrators from close circles), while 40% of older persons over 65 years of age in the Czech Republic suffer from this phenomenon in their immediate surroundings, in public contexts or as witnesses. There are very small gender differences in the data, supporting the hypothesis that age-based violence is serious problem for both women and men, and EAN seems to affect a large set of types of older persons. The prevalence includes all observed forms of EAN, i.e. **physical and psychological violence, material and financial abuse, restriction of personal freedoms, undermining of dignity, sexualised violence, online violence (incl. scams), victimisation** and some others. For people over 65 living outside institutional care across the country, the within item prevalence ranged from 0.1% (drug violence, abuse of medicine to gain control over the victim) to 15% (undermining of dignity). (For further details, please see the tables in Appendix below).

In the population, this corresponds to between 2 169 and **325 366 persons affected per year**. In a very rough estimate based on a modified social return on investment analysis (SROI), the EAN phenomenon represents an annual loss of 1 540 000 000 CZK (65 198 983 EUR).

The incidents have profound **impact on the quality of victim's life** including (% from survivors, N=236): feeling powerless (51%), tension (50%), anger, hatred (41%), fear (34%), difficulty sleeping, nightmares (33%), depression, anxiety (30%), deterioration of health (30%), loneliness (30%), shame (29%), difficulties in relationships with others (24%), guilt, feeling that

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it is my fault (23%), financial, material losses (23%), physical pain (13%), loss of help and support (12%), other problems (11%).

Only very small percentage of the victims did talk about the incident, and “only” 70% of those who did talk about it stated that it (at least to some extent) helped. For **not sharing about the EAN incidents**, respondents were giving following reasons: the incident seemed too banal (52 %); no one will be able to do anything about it (44%), I didn't want anyone to interfere (44%), I didn't want to hurt my loved ones (37%), I didn't want to hurt the family's reputation (30%), no one would believe me (26%), I was ashamed (26%), fear of revenge (18%), I didn't want punishment for the perpetrator (16%), **I am dependent on the offender's help (15%)**, or other (8 %).

We are now continuing to analyse the data and preparing an extensive report on more than 240 questionnaire items covered within the survey. These include the type of perpetrators, frequency and intensity of the incidents, with who the victims consulted (and who is missing from the intervention list), information about early adverse experiences of violence in the family of origin, etc..

We as a RESTABUS team also initiated and coordinated development of a **new EAN definition**, which was adopted by the Committee on the Rights of Older Persons of the Government Council for Human Rights on June 1st, 2022:

Elder abuse, neglect, and mistreatment (EAN) is a single or repeated, intentional or unintentional act or omission (to act) against an older person, typically in a relationship of reasonably expected trust, that results in physical, psychological, social, material, legal, or moral harm or injury, or a combination thereof. The consequence of this act or omission to act may be, in addition to a threat to property, health, life, liberty or human dignity, the creation or aggravation of situational, temporary or general vulnerability. The act or omission as defined above may or may not constitute a criminal offence. Its perpetrators may be individuals, institutions or the social environment.

Further, we closely cooperate with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) and other interest parties to initiate debates on how to address the EAN in the above-given broad definition. We support the MLSA in the following areas: to include the issue of EAN as one of the priorities for the Action plan on ageing (currently under development); in the preparation of a specific Action plan on violence against older persons as a further development of Action plan on gendered and domestic violence; to address the issue of EAN within the social and health services, where we have no relevant data yet; and (inspired by the new legislation on domestic violence) to start a discussion on drafting new legislation on Age-based violence and EAN, that would allow devising broad measures to prevent, identify, solve and heal EAN in the Czech society.

Our data also show that there is a considerable opportunity to use the restorative justice approaches in addressing the EAN (this opportunity was welcomed by 30 % of the victims in our sample) and we plan a conference and workshop for policymakers, experts and service providers with Mrs Arlene Groh (Waterloo, CAN) to introduce the restorative justice as a practical tool in EAN (to be held in Prague on April 25th). We also hope for the opportunity to present selected results of the RESTABUS study at the side events of the two upcoming meetings: the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons (a request submitted by Dr. Jan Marie Fritz, Lead UN Representative of the International Sociological Association); and INPEA virtual parallel event during the 67th NGO CSW Forum.

We rest at your disposal for any further information.

On behalf of our project team,



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Appendix:

Table 1: The prevalence

*) A respondent who has one or more experiences of any type of neglect and abuse is considered a victim.

Prevalence type	Victims*)	Women	Men	Age grp 65-84	Age grp 85+
Prevalence 1	29 %	28 %	29 %	28 %	38 %
Prevalence 2	39 %	38 %	40 %	38 %	48 %
Prevalence 3	41 %	40 %	42 %	40 %	50 %

Prevalence 1 = neglect and abuse by a close person

Prevalence 2 = neglect and abuse by a close person + in public institutions + scams

Prevalence 3 = neglect and abuse by a close person + in public institutions + scams+ witnessing

Data source: Survey RESTABUS 2022

Table 2: Prevalence by the type of elder abuse and neglect

Type of EAN	Victims*)	Women	Men	Age grp 65-84	Age grp 85+
Neglect	4 %	5 %	4 %	4 %	12 %
Financial	13 %	12 %	13 %	12 %	22 %
Emotional	21 %	21 %	21 %	20 %	26 %
Physical	2 %	2 %	2 %	2 %	4 %
Sexual	3 %	4 %	3 %	3 %	5 %
Violation of personal freedoms	8 %	8 %	8 %	7 %	18 %
Scams	19 %	16 %	22 %	18 %	21 %
EAN in public spaces	8 %	9 %	8 %	8 %	14 %
Witness	9 %	8 %	10 %	8 %	16 %

Data source: Survey RESTABUS 2022

Table 3: The perpetrators of identified EAN (as reported by victims)

	Total	Neglect	Financial	Emotional, physical, sexual	Violation of personal freedoms
	N = 1435	N = 176	N = 403	N = 609	N = 247
Partner, spouse	17 %	10 %	12 %	17 %	31 %
Children (including daughters-in-law and sons-in-law)	30 %	42 %	35 %	21 %	37 %
Other relative (including parents, grandchildren and other relatives)	13 %	17 %	19 %	9 %	10 %
Someone else I know more closely	8 %	5 %	8 %	9 %	6 %
Neighbour	4 %	7 %	1 %	5 %	4 %
Carer, home care nurse	1 %	3 %	1 %	0 %	1 %
Somebody else	11 %	9 %	18 %	10 %	4 %
Don't want to answer, don't know	16 %	7 %	5 %	30 %	8 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Data source: Survey RESTABUS 2022

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