

When stalking begins with a bunch of roses

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It was an important day of reflection, which had been organised by the women's coordination groups of the trade unions CGIL-CISL-UIL and SPI-CGIL, by the FNP CISL and the UILP UIL, in the conference room of the Apollonio Theatre in Varese, on the occasion of the World Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women, on November 25.

The meeting was organised to get the associations that have long been devoted to this question to talk to each other, to provide an initial opportunity to share real, everyday experiences that take place in prosperous Varese. The associations that took part are those most involved in supporting women: **Eos, Filo Rosa Auser, Cooperativa Lotta contro l'Emarginazione (Cooperative Against Marginalisation), Mares, the "Icore" Centre in Gorla Maggiore, Amico Fragile and Tutela della Persona (Protection of the Person).**

During the day, it was revealed how stalking can begin. "If a man calls 11 times a day while I'm working, to tell me that he loves me, he is jeopardising his work. If a man sends a bunch of roses to my house, every day, to win me over, it is an obsession," Camilla Zanzi, the representative of the Eos, the "oldest" association in Varese that deals with violence against women, said at the meeting.

It was also revealed how prejudices against foreigners are often contradicted by the truth. "Fifty percent of the non-EU women who have come to our association have been abused by an Italian man," explained Anna Maria Tagliaretti, from the association Filo Rosa Auser. And it was revealed that the abusers also include mother-in-laws. "We've got five," Tagliaretti concluded.

Among the speakers, there were also the heads of the Cooperativa Lotta Contro L'emarginazione and of Mares, groups that deal with the hardships and victims of the slave trade; the latter is active in a delicate area of Varese Province, that of

Pianbosco. "Our group is a street unit, which is made up only of volunteers, who provide assistance to young women who are victims of slavery for the sex trade. The young women who populate the streets of Pianbosco, and around the town of Tradate, or on the highways between Varese and Como, don't choose to be there. They're the victims of a racket that forces them, with beatings and threats against them and their families, to sell their bodies on our roads. We want to be the outstretched hand of civil society for these women," explained Chiara Frangi, the Mares representative. From now on, we are all a little more united in a common effort to provide a response to a dramatic situation that is too often underestimated.

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