

STOP VIOLENCE

NEWSLETTER

WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

nr. 19 (2019)

CUPRINSUL

Women's Law Centre launched Best Practice Guidelines for employees of the penitentiary system	2
Aligning the national law to the Istanbul Convention	4
Beijing+25 Sub-Regional Consultation	5
NIJ trainees trained in applying legislation on domestic violence	6
Days of America - celebrated in Chisinau	7
Proiecte de impact și mai puțină violență în viața femeilor din Republica Moldova	8
WAVE Conference: 25 Years of Defending Women's Rights	9
WLC activity in figures	10
The nightmare of a 91-year-old woman is over. The perpetrators were sentenced	11

WOMEN'S LAW CENTRE LAUNCHED THE BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PENITENTIARY SYSTEM



National Prison Administration and Women's Law Centre launched the *Best Practice Guidelines for employees of the penitentiary system* on Tuesday, 19 November. The event took place at the Ministry of Justice and was attended by representatives of public authorities, international organisations and civil society.

'Today we are discussing about one of the most vulnerable categories of people, women in detention, that require a different approach and additional efforts to ensure their re-socialisation. I've been pleasantly surprised to see the

case studies presented in the Guidelines and the complex approach to protecting the rights of and providing support to women deprived of their liberty. We all need to make efforts to ensure that detainees are treated with dignity and that, once released from detention, they are ready to get back to living in freedom', said Minister of Justice, Fadei Nagacevschi, during the event.

The Guidelines aim at strengthening the capacity of penitentiary system employees to respond to the special needs of women deprived of their liberty by ensuring compliance with international

standards and practices, in particular the Bangkok Rules and, hence, the rights of women in detention.

Adam Amberg, Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden, thanked WLC for its involvement and dedication to promoting gender equality and supporting vulnerable women. 'These Guidelines promote universal values, such as equity, tolerance, dignity and respect for the human rights. I hope these Guidelines become a useful source of information for penitentiary employee', said the representative of the Embassy of Sweden.



Launching of these Guidelines marks the end of an important stage in the cooperation with Rusca Penitentiary No 7, where legal and psychological counseling was offered and art therapy sessions were held during 2017-2019, and prison employees received trainings relevant for their needs.

‘Unfortunately, the state system cannot yet provide full support to some categories of inmates, hence, involving non-government organisations helps us improve our work. I hope and I want this cooperation to continue, for us to find the power, patience, will and funding needed to keep on working in this area’, said Director of the National Prison Administration, Liuba Jignea-Suveica.

A global survey shows that most women who end up in detention are convicted for violent crimes against their husbands or domestic partners. ‘Women in detention are group we are interested in, as they have a history of abuse and



we wanted to analyse the link between their experience of being abused, the fact that they are in detention and how detention impacts their psychological condition and overall welfare. Under the Project we had a chance to empower legally the detained women, inform them about their rights, and represent them in the court. They also received psychological counseling, helping them overcome the stress of detention, facilitating the contact with their children and families. We organised art therapy sessions to strengthen the trust among detainees and prepare them for their release and contact with the outside world. Strengthening the capacities of employees working in Penitentiary No 7 was another important issue we focused on, in particular raising awareness of international standards and best practices, and ensuring an efficient response to women’s special needs. As a result of these activities, we decided to develop some guidelines with recommendations for prison employees to ensure an efficient response of the prison system



to women’s needs’, said Natalia Vilcu, Executive Director of Women’s Law Centre.

The Guidelines were developed under ‘Improving the access to justice, legal support and psychological assistance for women in detention’ Project supported financially by Sweden and implemented by Women’s Law Centre in partnership with National Prison Administration, Penitentiary No 7 and Institute for Family and Social Initiatives during 2018-2019.



JOINT EFFORTS TO ALIGN THE NATIONAL LEGISLATION WITH THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION AND BRING THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA CLOSER TO THE RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION

High officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations working in the area of domestic violence discussed the importance and the need of ratifying the Istanbul Convention during an event organized by the French Embassy in Chisinau on 3 October this year.

During the presentations, Natalia Vilcu, WLC Executive Director, spoke about challenges, limitations and solutions for improving the legal framework on domestic violence. She reiterated the need to ensure an efficient intervention in cases of domestic violence and to change the perception and stereotypes towards this phenomenon and the victims of domestic violence.

At the same time, she highlighted the importance of intersectoral cooperation - an approach that is currently limited, but which is decisive in eradicating domestic violence. Civil society representatives, who attended the event, urged the state players to make a coordinated and persistent effort to ratify

the Istanbul Convention. It would contribute to enhancing the security and protection to the victims of domestic violence.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Nicu Popescu, assured that the authorities of the Republic of Moldova are open to ratify the Istanbul Convention as soon as possible. 'Women's rights and combating violence against women are primarily about how we want to see the functioning of our society. We wish to have a European society and this implies human relations that correspond to these expectations of fairness, mutual respect and, obviously, lack of violence in these relations'.

The French presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has set as priority to encourage countries to ratify the Istanbul Convention - the most important instrument at the European level on the prevention of violence against women, the protection of victims and the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women.



Since July, an inter-ministerial group composed of the representatives of four ministries: Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection met twice a month to adjust the legal framework on domestic violence to the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. Amendments will be made to the Civil Code and the Civil Procedure Code, the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code, the Contravention Code, the Enforcement Code, the Family Code, the Law on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence, etc.

The proposed amendments aimed to ensure a better protection of women victims of domestic violence and observance of relevant standards in the field. The activities are supported by UN Women in Moldova and are part of the 'Elimination of Violence against Women' Project implemented by the Women's Law Centre ('WLC') during June 2018 - September 2020



'BEIJING+25' SUB-REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS AT A NEW PHASE OF PROMOTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY



The Women's Law Centre participated along with more than 100 guests from seven countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine - at the 'Beijing+25' sub-regional consultations to discuss the achievements and actions to be followed almost 25 years

after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action on Strengthening Women's Rights.

The consultations took place on 4 and 5 September in Chisinau and brought together advocates of women's rights representing civil society from the Eastern Partnership countries and Romania, officials and development partners in an open dialogue focused on solutions, good practices, innovative examples of how gender equality essentially contributes to the development of countries.

Following the consultations, a document outlining key achievements, subregion-specific gaps and challenges that impact the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as

well as recommendations for states and the next actions, will be developed.

To this end, the participants worked in six groups in which they discussed violence against women, access to public services, the role of the media in issues related to gender equality, women's empowerment, good governance, peace and security.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women, are considered one of the most visionary development pathways for women and girls worldwide. At that time, 189 countries of the world, including the Republic of Moldova, committed to fight gender stereotypes and contribute to ensure gender equality.

TRAINEES AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE KNOW MORE ABOUT THE INTERVENTION IN CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Prosecutors and judges from over 23 districts of the country participated in the *'Judicial Practice of Examining Domestic Violence Cases'* training held on 26-27 September. The trainers tackled the phenomenon from the perspective of psychology, the relevant law, the way of investigating the cases, the ECtHR case-law on domestic violence, and last but not least, analyzed issues arising in the trial of domestic violence offenses. The participants presented situations and views from their own experience. New perspectives and ways of solving the cases of domestic violence were discussed with the colleagues.



The trainings are organized by the WLC in partnership with the National Institute of Justice and the support of the US Embassy in Moldova

MOLDOVAN-AMERICAN CULTURE, TRADITIONS AND COOPERATION CELEBRATED DURING THE 'AMERICA DAYS' EVENT



For the first time this year, on 6 September, the US Embassy organized the 'America Days' event together with the local partners, which aimed to promote the American culture, cuisine, sport, but also the projects supported by USA in Moldova.

In a relaxed and warm atmosphere, with jazz music playing in the background, Chisinau people got acquainted with the diversity of activities carried out by the US Embassy in Moldova. As an implementation partner, WLC presented its projects in justice sector, discussed the phenomenon of domestic violence with the visitors and provided them with information about the services they can avail of at the centre. We were glad that youth was interested in the issue of domestic violence and once informed, they returned with their friends to the WLC stand to continue the discussions.

To the best informed and intuitive visitors, who were able to answer questions regarding forms of violence, stereotypes and gender biases, we awarded symbolic prizes, which would remind them that violence must not be tolerated.



IMPACTFUL PROJECTS AND LESS VIOLENCE IN WOMEN'S LIVES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA THANKS TO THE SUPPORT PROGRAM FROM SWEDEN

Three years of strong projects for Moldovan women. Three years when we were able to contribute to improving the system in terms of legislation and protection of the victims of gender-based violence and to support professionals from the judiciary, criminal investigation and prosecution, police, social assistance, health and forensic medicine. During 2016-2019, together we organised awareness raising and attitude change activities, lobby, advocacy and research work allowing us to grow as a team and organisation.

We thank the Swedish Embassy
for their support!

REZULTATE DE CARE SUNTEM MÂNDRI

MAI MULT DE 2 MII DE VICTIME ALE VIOLENȚEI DOMESTICE AU FOST ASISTATE LEGAL ȘI PSIHOLÓGIC

FEMEILE DIN DETENȚIE AU FOST SUSȚINUTE PRIN CONSILIERE PSIHOLÓGICĂ, LEGALĂ ȘI TERAPIE PRIN ARTĂ

3 CAZURI ALE VICTIMELOR VIOLENȚEI DOMESTICE AU FOST PREZENTATE CURȚII EUROPENE PENTRU DREPTURILE OMULUI

STRATEGIA NAȚIONALĂ DE PREVENIRE ȘI COMBATERE A VIOLENȚEI ÎMPOTRIVA FEMEILOR ȘI VIOLENȚEI DOMESTICE 2018-2023 ȘI PLANUL DE ACȚIUNI 2018-2020 AU FOST ELABORATE ȘI ADOPTATE DE CĂTRE GUVERN

PILOTAREA ȘI ADOPTAREA PROCEDURILOR ȘI STANDARDELOR DE OPERARE PENTRU ASISTENȚII SOCIALI PENTRU A RĂSPUNDE LA CAZURILE DE VIOLENȚĂ DOMESTICĂ

ELABORAREA RAPORTULUI CU PRIVIRE LA COSTURILE VIOLENȚEI DOMESTICE ȘI VIOLENȚEI ÎMPOTRIVA FEMEILOR

ELABORAREA RAPORTULUI DE ANALIZĂ CU PRIVIRE LA COMPATIBILITATEA LEGISLAȚIEI NAȚIONALE CU PREVEDERILE CONVENȚIEI CONSILIULUI EUROPEI CU PRIVIRE LA PREVENIREA ȘI COMBATEREA VIOLENȚEI ÎMPOTRIVA FEMEILOR ȘI A VIOLENȚEI DOMESTICE



În 2016-2019 Suedia a susținut instituțional organizația neguvernamentală Centrul de Drept al Femeilor (CDF) pentru a implementa și promova politici publice și acțiuni de prevenire și combatere a violenței domestice în toată țara. Suntem mândri de echipa CDF, de colaborarea pe care am avut-o și apreciem rezultatele remarcabile pe care le-am obținut împreună.



WAVE CONFERENCE: 25 YEARS OF DEFENDING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

WLC, together with several Moldovan organisations active in preventing and combating domestic violence, participated in the 21st WAVE Conference '25 Years of Defending Women's Rights: Milestones and Visions for the Future' held on 7-9 October in Tallinn.

It was an anniversary meeting with a broad agenda of discussions, summaries and new goals. 'The conference marked the 25th anniversary of the platform. Together we celebrated the progress, but we also analyzed the negative developments in the field of promoting women's rights. We were able to witness a wave of resistance to women's rights and gender equality in several European countries. In some states there have been attempts to change laws or policies, which would ultimately limit women's rights. The experiences of these countries have taught us to be vigilant, to strengthen our efforts, to show commitment, to promote constantly the women's rights, because fighting all forms of violence against women and girls continues to be a priority', said Eleonora Grosu, WLC Programme Coordinator.

During the two days of the conference, the participants took part in discussion panels and workshops dedicated to fighting against sexual violence, encouraging young women to promote women's rights, identifying the specificity of gender-based violence in the online environment, good practices of survivor-centred health care services.



Foto credit: Natalia Rezneac



WLC ACTIVITY IN FIGURES

Between 1 August 2019 and 31 October 2019 WLC provided support to 175 beneficiaries.

- **Primary legal aid:** Victims received primary legal aid in 175 cases, such as preparing and filing applications and complains with law enforcement bodies or appealing against decisions of the official examiners or courts. WLC lawyers obtained 23 protection orders for victims of violence.
- **Qualified legal aid:** Lawyers were appointed to represent victims' interests in 24 cases: 16 criminal cases, 1 contravention case, 7 civil cases, such as dissolution of marriage, determining the domicile of underaged children, collection of alimony for children maintenance.
- **Psychological assistance:** A total of 72 victims received individual psychological support, including long-term psychological support for 4 women. 38 psychological evaluation reports were prepared and shared with law enforcement or the court.
- **Social assistance:** 14 victims were provided social assistance - social counselling and vocational guidance. Three victims were referred to shelters.

BENEFICIARIES' SOCIAL PROFILE:

Area of residence: 139 victims are from the urban area and 36 from the rural area. Most of them have their domicile in Chisinau, but women from other districts also asked for help, specifically from: Anenii Noi, Calarasi, Cantemir, Cimişlia, Drochia, Edineţ, Falesti, Hincesti, Orhei, Soroca, Stefan-Voda, Ungheni, Tirapsol, Vulcanesti.

Age: Most domestic violence victims are 25-34 years old (55 women), followed by 35-44 years old (40 women) and 18-24 years old beneficiaries (13 women). Victims aged 0-17 (10 women), 45-54 (17 women), 55-64 (19 women) and over 65 (21 women) also availed of WLC support.

Level of education: 122 victims have secondary education (including incomplete secondary or specialised secondary), while 43 = higher education.

Employment: 60 women are employed, 58 women – unemployed, and 13 women have their work suspended due to the childcare leave. 103 - are mothers taking care of their minor children.



Victim's relationship with the perpetrator: In 140 cases the victim had the status of (former) intimate partner/wife. Violence among relatives was in 5 cases where the victim was the parent. In 9 cases, the victims were daughters/sisters.

Victims contacted the WLC being advised by police officers, social workers, lawyers, psychologists, maternity centres staff, other organisations working in the field, former WLC beneficiaries, or by email.

THE NIGHTMARE OF A 91-YEAR-OLD WOMAN SUBJECTED TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS OVER. THE PERPETRATORS WERE SENTENCED

It was a quiet summer evening. The stillness covered Maria's house too. At about 10 pm she finished the work in the yard, closed the house door with the hook and prepared for sleep. She was lying in the bed when suddenly heard a loud noise, as if someone was running through the house. She thought that a relative had come, but within seconds the offender burst into the room. He grabbed her clothes from the chest and asked where the money was. While hitting her face, he threatened to cut her with a knife. The money was in the barn, but she didn't manage to say a word. While the offender held the pillow over her face, she felt an acute pain in the anal area. Shortly after that, she lost her consciousness. While the woman was in a faint, the two offenders, as in the meantime another man had joined, began to search for money through the closet, the clothes, throughout the house. They managed to steal 10 thousand lei, money that the old woman saved for her funerals. When she woke up, she felt her whole body hurt, she had no power to call neighbors or anyone.

The next day she told a neighbor what happened and called the police. The perpetrators, one



of whom was underage, had everything planned beforehand. They knew that Maria, aged 91, lived alone and lacked protection. After the nightmare event, because of the old age and health conditions, her vulnerability increased daily. The prosecutor asked for the involvement of the WLC team when realising that the victim had difficulties to

appear in the court hearings in order to be heard and to defend her rights. Although, according to the law, the injured party is obliged to be heard in the court regarding the circumstances of the case, this case was a procedural exception.

Thus, in order to ensure access to justice for the old woman, WLC appointed a lawyer who represented the rights and interests of the victim in this serious case of sexual violence. Following the psychological evaluation, we were able to prove that the victim's appearance in the court would have the effect of repeated victimisation, and the health status of the old woman would worsen.

Even though after the summer event the woman moved to her son, she had an overwhelming fear of staying alone. Because of shame, pain, insecurity, the woman avoided telling what had happened to her. It seemed unreal to her. This made her isolate herself, avoid talks with her relatives and no longer engage in activities she liked before. To overcome these conditions, the woman received psychological counselling.

The abusers were sentenced to ten years of imprisonment. The case was merged with another rape case, which the perpetrators had previously committed.



WHO ARE WE?

Public Association “Women’s Law Center” (hereinafter – WLC) is a non-governmental organization, established in 2009. The purpose of WLC is to ensure women’s rights from gender perspective, both in the process of elaboration and implementation of the law.

WLC carries out activities aimed at preventing and combating domestic violence, provides direct legal and psychological assistance to the victims of domestic violence. WLC advocates for equal opportunities among men and women in public and private life, is a credible partner of the government and civil society and participates in elaboration of public policies.

WLC ensures Secretariat of the National Coalition „Life without Domestic Violence (hereinafter National Coalition). National Coalition comprises 18 non-governmental organizations and public institutions active in preventing and combating domestic violence and violence against women.

CONTACT INFO:

M. Kogalniceanu street, nr. 87
MD 2009, Chişinău,
Republic of Moldova
Tel/fax (+373) 22 811 999
Mobile: (+373) 68 855 050



Legal counselling – **080080000** (free call)

This newsletter is Founded by Sweden and OAK Foundation



PARTNERS:

