

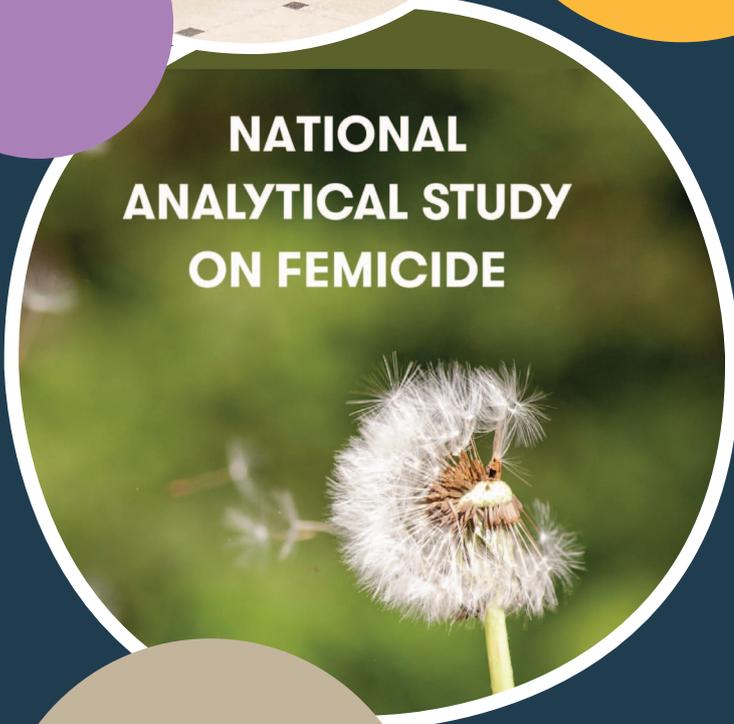


WOMEN'S  
LAW CENTRE



NATIONAL  
ANALYTICAL STUDY  
ON FEMICIDE

ANNUAL REPORT



2021

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Women's Law Centre is grateful to Sweden, OAK Foundation, Sigrid Rausing Trust, UN Women Moldova, UNDP Moldova, ABA ROLI, Swiss Philanthropy Foundation and ARC Romania for their valuable support and contribution to promoting women's rights, providing assistance and protection to victims of domestic violence in the Republic of Moldova.

Our team is grateful to the members of the Board of Directors and the members of the General Assembly for their involvement and guidance throughout the process of promoting gender equality and reducing gender-based and domestic violence.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to community leaders, young people, librarians, journalists and other professionals for sharing their desire for change and acting responsively to promote gender equality in Moldova.

We give special thanks to the public institutions we work with to ensure the promotion and protection of women's rights and to better respond to cases of domestic violence.

WLC also expresses its gratitude to the colleagues in civil society. We continue to believe that we will find and create space to do meaningful work even in the most difficult

situations. Every day we demonstrate that important results can be achieved and that change for the better is inevitable, no matter how bleak the reality may be at times.

**We are grateful for the work we have been able to do this year, hand in hand with our partners, colleagues and supporters. Without you, many of the results achieved would not have been possible. We are firmly committed to strengthening our strategy for 2022 and look forward to continuing our joint efforts.**

# CONTENT

Intervention Area: Prevention	7
Intervention Area: Protection	19
Intervention Area: Integrated Policies and Advocacy	25
Research Results are used for Advocacy Purposes	31
Women in Detention	35
Small Grants Programme – IMPULS	36
Exchange of Experience	37
2021 Budget	38



## ABOUT THE WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

### WLC VISION

Women and their children – victims or potential victims of gender-based violence against women are protected by effective systems for preventing, monitoring and combating gender-based violence against women at local and national level.

### WLC Mission

WLC contributes to promoting gender equality and preventing and combating violence against women in the Republic of Moldova by raising public awareness, building the capacity of professionals, providing holistic services to assist and protect women, conducting research and analysis, monitoring the legislation and aligning it with international standards.

### WLC VALUES

- ✓ Respect for human rights
- ✓ Integrated and holistic approach based on legal and economic empowerment of women
- ✓ Victim-centered approach
- ✓ Respect for beneficiaries' decisions and provision of the needed support
- ✓ Professionalism and impartiality
- ✓ Non-discrimination
- ✓ Accountability
- ✓ Teamwork



# INTERVENTION AREA: PREVENTION

Promoting zero tolerance of gender-based and domestic violence and building the skills of professionals remain key priorities in the prevention area. We promote changes in social and cultural patterns of behaviour to eliminate prejudice and other practices based on gender stereotypes.

The WLC awareness-raising activities reached **2.253.575** citizens in **34 districts** of the Republic of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region and ATU Gagauzia (ATUG). WLC also conducted an extensive information campaign on the benefits of ratifying the Istanbul Convention, targeting MPs, members of government, political parties and various legislative platforms.

WLC organised **46 training sessions** on the application of the legislation in this field for **1.237 professionals**: judges, prosecutors, their assistants and advisors, police officers, doctors, social workers, paralegals.

More than **30 meetings** and events in open dialogue format were organised in partnership with central state institutions and LPAs, including from the Transnistrian region and ATUG, with the aim of increasing involvement in combating domestic violence.

## Public events, campaigns and open dialogue with state representatives

- Different models. Different discourses.** – an unique event aimed at raising awareness about positive gender roles, social norms and gender-based violence. Eight public and socially active people gave motivational speeches on topics such as gender equality, the role and power of the community, family harmony, the role of the church in preventing domestic violence, education and parent-child relationships. The event was streamed online and was viewed by **237 640 people**.



- Messages through art for women survivors of domestic violence** – 20 women survivors of domestic violence enjoyed the benefits of art therapy. Thus, in November, they attended a series of workshops organised and hosted by WLC, which resulted into **5 symbolic artworks**, which represent their life stories, the path from suffering to freedom and regaining confidence in a secure future. The artworks were exhibited on the premises of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. The event was attended by representatives of the Parliament, UN Women, the Swedish Embassy and women survivors of domestic violence. The final event could be watched online on social media. Online public impact – **170 763 people**.

**DRAGĂ DEPUTATĂ, ASCULTĂ-MĂ ȘI DE MINE!**

„Violența în familia noastră durează peste 30 de ani, încă de când copiii erau mici, dar niciodată agresorul nu a fost pedepsit, de fiecare dată a ieșit basma curată. Când mă adresam, poliția era de partea lui – legea bărbătească. Violența a continuat, însă eu mult timp nu am mai încercat să-mi fac dreptate. Vă spun foarte sincer, nu mai cred că cel vinovat va fi pedepsit, pentru că la noi totul poate fi influențat, dacă se vorbește cu cine trebuie...”

#opreșteviolența

**CUM MĂ VA AJUTA RATIFICAREA CONVENȚIEI DE LA ISTANBUL?**

**Beneficii:**

- Femeile ce au trecut printr-o experiență de viol vor primi suport și sprijin în cadrul centrelor de citală specializate, care la moment lipsesc în țara noastră. Ele vor beneficia de consiliere juridică, psihologică și la necesitate, vor fi însoțite la judecătoria și poliție.
- Femeile care au trecut prin viol conjugal sau căsătorie forțată se vor putea apăra în instanță prin inițierea procedurilor penale. Convenția de la Istanbul impune ajustarea legislației în acest sens.
- Femeile afectate de violență sexuală vor avea acces la investigații și tratament medical gratuit, indiferent dacă dețin poliță de asigurare medicală sau nu.
- Femeile vor beneficia de protecție și în cazul amenințărilor sau eventualelor acțiuni de răzbunare venite din partea agresorului.

- Communication campaign on the benefits of ratifying the Istanbul Convention** – WLC organised a communication campaign with the aim of increasing advocacy for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the Republic of Moldova. More than 1,000 sets of postcards illustrating the benefits of ratifying the Istanbul Convention have been designed and distributed. The target audience was MPs, government representatives, social workers, law enforcement representatives, forensic doctors, teachers, the general public: paralegals, young people from all over the country, librarians, journalists, community leaders.

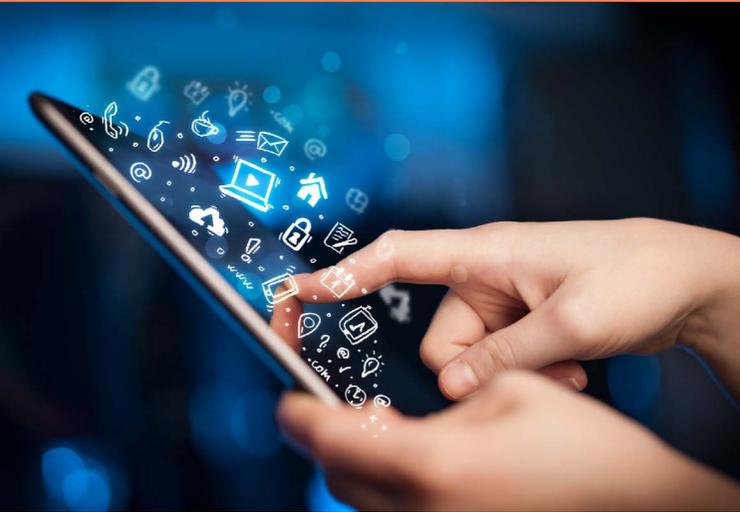
**CUM MĂ VA AJUTA RATIFICAREA CONVENȚIEI DE LA ISTANBUL?**

**Beneficii:**

- Femeile vor fi ajutate să obțină asistența gratuită a unui avocat plătit din contul statului, în toate procesele ce au legătură cu violența față de femei.
- Femeile și copiii lor vor beneficia de suport și ajutor în adăposturi specializate, unde vor primi consiliere juridică, psihologică, asistență socială și medicală, inclusiv de abilitare economică și încadrare în câmpul muncii.
- Specialiștii vor fi obligați să acționeze rapid și să interzică agresorului să telefoneze și să comunice cu persoana supusă violenței în familie, să se aple în apropierea ei sau să intre în anumite locuri unde ar putea să o întâlnească.

#opreșteviolența

## Innovative solutions to prevent domestic violence



### MOBILE APP

We have continued our efforts to develop a mobile app that allows victims of domestic violence or people who want to be informed from reliable sources to find out about the help they can get if they experience domestic violence. The app will be user-friendly, safe and practical, allowing users to make an emergency call to services for victims of domestic violence and to find out about legal, psychological and social assistance available to them. The app is expected to be launched in 2022.

### SOCIAL HUB

Social hub is a new concept launched by WLC to involve as many young people as possible in promoting zero tolerance towards domestic violence. In 2021 we involved **15 young people** in trainings who subsequently came up with project ideas to promote gender equality. Thus, **10 initiatives** proposed by **14 young people** from the following 6 localities were implemented: Chişinău, Orhei, Briceni, Ştefan Vodă, Sângera, Hânceşti. More than **1500 young people** were informed about gender equality and gender-based violence and were given information and tools to become active agents in promoting human rights in their communities and in preventing and combating gender stereotypes.



## Increasing the level of knowledge of professionals on combating domestic violence

WLC organised **46 skills-building** activities for **1.237 professionals** in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence. As a result of the events, professionals have a better understanding of victims' rights and the protection measures provided by law.

### TRAINING PROVIDED TO PARALEGALS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PARALEGALS OF MOLDOVA



- ✓ 2 two-day training sessions for 50 paralegals followed by a series of mentoring activities.
- ✓ the Practical Guidelines for Paralegals has been developed: **Ensuring access to justice for victims of domestic violence.**

### TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONALS



**35 future judges și 40 future prosecutors**, graduates of the National Institute of Justice, participated in the public lecture 'Access to justice for women. Istanbul Convention' organised by the National Institute of Justice in partnership with WLC.



**37 representatives** of public security divisions from **25 districts** of the country have been trained to effectively implement the legislation on preventing and combating domestic violence.



We provided training of trainers for the **Integrated Law Enforcement Training Center** and trained 16 police officers to be further involved in prevention activities in the field of domestic violence.



An institutionalised domestic violence training at the **Integrated Law Enforcement Training Centre** and a course material was **developed based on the domestic violence** training curriculum for police officers.



## ■ SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

✓ In partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, we organised two-day online courses on the intersectoral cooperation mechanism. The two trainings involved police officers, social workers, medical staff, probation officers, public lawyers from Făleşti district.



✓ The representatives of the National Social Assistance System have the necessary knowledge to collect data on gender-based violence. As a result of the online training activities, **61 professionals** from **36 districts** and municipalities acquired relevant knowledge and skills to collect data and fill in the statistical form No. 9 according to the existing requirements.

## ■ SUPPORT FOR STRENGTHENING THE FORENSIC RESPONSE

✓ The training manual on forensic response to domestic violence cases was developed and published. The training manual contains the relevant information for the Optional course in domestic and gender-based violence taught at the State University of Medicine and Pharmacy ‘Nicolae Testemițanu’ to 6th year students, as well as doctors attending the continuing education program. The training manual is available in Romanian, Russian and English languages.



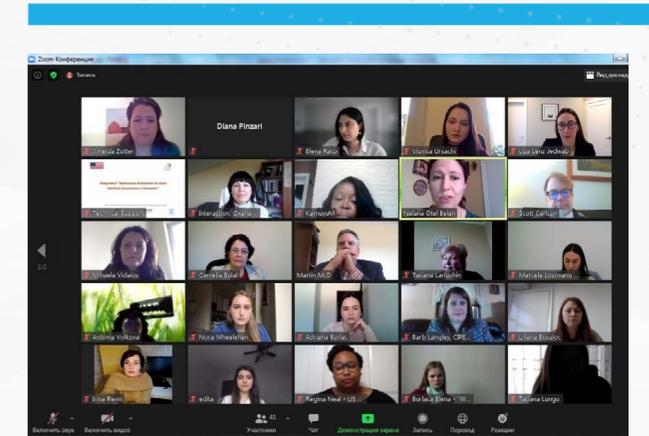
✓ The Instructions on the Forensic Medicine Center’s response to domestic violence cases, including gender-based violence, have been developed. The Instructions were distributed to all forensic doctors in the country and to the employees of the Faculty of Forensic Medicine within the SUMP ‘Nicolae Testemițanu’.

## ■ TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR JOURNALISTS



✓ 20 media representatives (TV, radio, online media) improved their knowledge on the phenomenon of domestic violence and the important role of media institutions in covering the topic in a gender-sensitive and non-stereotypical manner.

✓ We awarded 6 professional journalists who have covered topics such as success stories of women survivors of domestic violence, the rehabilitation process for perpetrators, systemic gaps and shortcomings, the importance of ratifying the Istanbul Convention, and gender stereotypes and prejudices.



## ■ SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS

✓ The Women’s Law Centre has channelled its efforts into strengthening the organisational capacities of women’s business associations and civil society organisations to represent and provide services to women in the Republic of Moldova on both sides of the Nistru River through coaching activities; drafting policies against discrimination and harassment and for the promotion of gender equality; explaining how policy provisions could be integrated into the day-to-day activities of women’s CSOs and how compliance could ensure gender equality and enhance women’s economic empowerment.



### ■ TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR LIBRARIANS

- ✓ **25 librarians** deepened their understanding of the complexities of domestic violence: forms of violence phenomenon, protection tools for victims, how stereotypes fuel domestic violence, control tactics used by perpetrators and victim survival strategies. This will enable them to provide support, information and guidance to women going through abusive experiences.
- ✓ Due to the Grant Program for librarians, **11 librarians** implemented **11 community projects** by organising **44 activities**. The activities involved **1766 people** from **31 communities** across the country.



## Strengthening the dialogue between the members of the National Coalition 'Life without Domestic Violence'

- ✓ WLC organised in partnership with the International Centre 'La Strada' and the National Coalition 'Life without Domestic Violence' the first edition of the International Conference on preventing and combating gender based violence and domestic violence. The event was attended by 40 high-level speakers, such as the country's President Maia Sandu and other representatives of public authorities, well-known international and national experts in the field, development partners, public leaders, media representatives. The conference was based on the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Integrated Policies.





## INTERVENTION AREA: PROTECTION

In 2021, assistance and support was provided to 859 women who experienced domestic violence, and they benefited from a range of services: legal, psychological, social assistance and economic empowerment. In most cases, the beneficiaries were provided with counselling by telephone or online. 522 victims are from urban areas and 316 from rural areas. Beneficiaries aged 25-44 most frequently turned to WLC for help. The majority (85%) have secondary education, secondary vocational or incomplete education.

## ■ QUALIFIED LEGAL AID

WLC appointed lawyers to represent the interests of victims, continuing to represent them in **49 cases**. Of the total number of cases, 56% are criminal, 24% are contraventional offences, 16% are administrative liability cases, and 4% are applications to the European Court of Human Rights.



## ■ PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

**199 victims** of domestic violence received psychological support, including **52 victims** who received long-term psychological support and **51 beneficiaries** who were provided with short-term psychological support. **88 evaluation reports** were prepared for victims of domestic violence.



## ■ SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**289 victims** received social counselling, thus finding out useful information on benefits, pensions and material aid provided by the state. Out of the total number of victims, 35 were provided with packages with essential products or social assistance. 28 victims were provided with accommodation in shelters for victims of domestic violence.



## ■ ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

✓ **12 victims** benefited from economic empowerment opportunities. A vocational counsellor identified the vocational needs of each beneficiary. Thus, 7 people received vocational training and 3 people were provided with technical assistance for continuing their handicrafts activities.

✓ In addition, **26 victims** received vocational counselling, identified a job or sources to improve their professional skills.

✓ A total of **11 occupational** therapy workshops were organised and attended by **50 women**. Each workshop focused on a particular skill: making personalised photo albums, quilting art, clay crafts, crafts made from wool.



## ■ STRATEGIC LITIGATION

ECHR rendered a judgment on an application made by a WLC lawyer on behalf of a victim of sexual violence. By its decision the ECHR ordered the application be struck out of its list of cases. Having taken note of the information contained in the Government's statement that the present case ultimately led to the final conviction of the offender and to the sentencing of the offender to twelve years' imprisonment, as well as of the fact that the plaintiff was compensated domestically and the amount of compensation proposed by the Government on the basis of the unilateral statement – which is in line with the amounts awarded in similar cases – the Court considers that further consideration of the application is no longer justified (Article 37(1)(c)).

Two other applications have been filed with the ECHR. The authorities failed to apply national legislation to protect the victims of domestic violence, thus generating tolerance towards the unlawful actions of the perpetrators, which manifested in gender discrimination against the plaintiffs. The plaintiffs believe that the authorities failed to fulfil their positive obligations under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights to enforce the provisions of the law on the punishment of rape and to conduct an effective investigation and prosecution.





INTERVENTION  
AREA:  
INTEGRATED  
POLICIES AND  
ADVOCACY

## LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ALIGNED TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

- WLC, as lead organisation, together with the member organisations of the National Coalition 'Life without Domestic Violence', prepared the Shadow Report for the 3rd Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The report describes the progress made by our country in preventing and combating gender-based violence and makes recommendations based on the challenges women face in accessing justice, support and protection services. WLC participated and actively contributed to promoting the recommendations formulated in the 3rd cycle of UPR: information sessions with representatives of diplomatic missions to Moldova, international organizations, debriefing sessions following the presentation of the Country Report of the Republic of Moldova (Geneva, 28 January 2022).



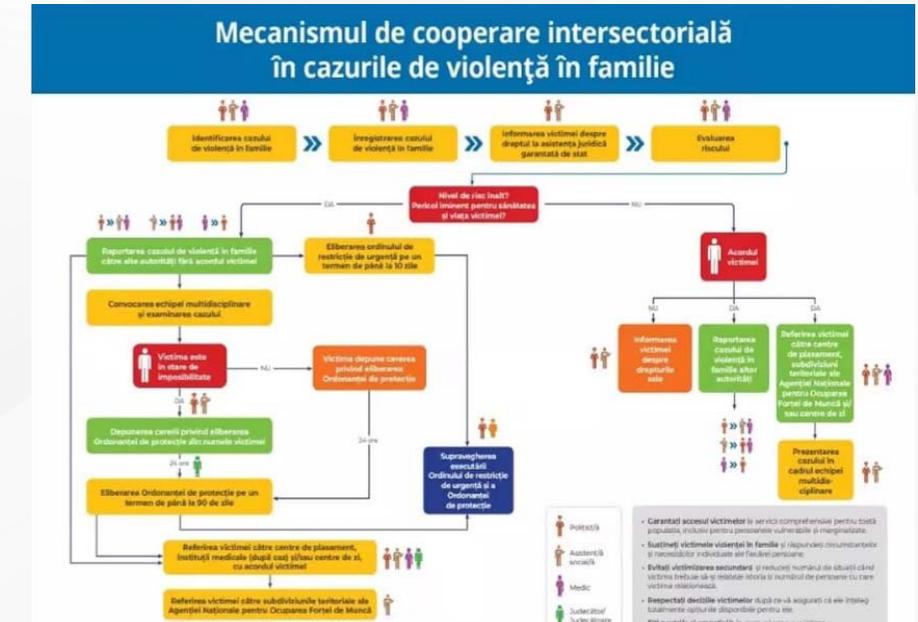
- The package 2 with laws on the compatibility of Moldovan legislation with the Istanbul Convention – at the Ministry of Justice, the authority responsible for promoting changes in legislation, was included in the Government's Action Plan for 2021-2022. The draft law amends the main provisions on domestic violence in the Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Civil Procedure Code, the Contravention Code, etc.

## THE COORDINATED RESPONSE MECHANISM IS IN PLACE AND IS BEING IMPLEMENTED

- We actively supported Moldova's ratification of the Istanbul Convention, an international instrument that establishes a comprehensive framework of legal and policy measures to prevent domestic violence, support victims and prosecute perpetrators.
- We have further implemented activities to promote coordination and cooperation between professionals in their response to domestic violence cases. Thus, we provided support to the MLSP to develop a mechanism for intersectoral cooperation for a more effective response to domestic violence.

## THE MECHANISM OF INTERSECTORAL COOPERATION, ONE OF THE PRIORITIES OF NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The MLSP approved the framework of the intersectoral cooperation mechanism, including the key actions of professionals and their roles in a coordinated response to domestic violence cases. The framework will be used in training activities to promote the requirements and responsibilities for implementing a coordinated response to domestic violence cases in an effective, prompt and consistent way.



## COORDINATED RESPONSE POLICY

In partnership with the MLSP, we have been working on the development of a coordinated response mechanism together with consultation at the local level. A group of experts comprising representatives of the police force, social assistance sector, health care, forensic medicine and the associative sector was involved in the process of developing the mechanism. In the process of project development, consultations were held with members of multidisciplinary teams and local public administration from the districts of Basarabeasca, Telenesti and Falesti.



## ■ THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE FORENSIC MEDICINE CENTER'S RESPONSE

- ✓ In 2021, WLC supported the development of the instructions to enable Moldovan forensic doctors to assess cases of domestic and gender-based violence accurately and quickly. The Instructions describe all the appropriate actions geared towards meeting the needs of victims, enabling the provision of standardised and quality forensic services. The instructions are in place for about 70 professionals working at the Forensic Medicine Center, who are responsible for examining cases of violence, including domestic violence and gender-based violence. This is a first step that will improve the coordinated response of the authorities to cases of domestic violence.

- ✓ The forensic regulation on the severity of bodily injury or health of the person is subject to adjustments. In this regard, WLC held several consultation meetings with subject matter specialists. The Director of the Forensic Medicine Center, Vasile Șarpe, has shown willingness to improve the coordinated response of the authorities to domestic violence cases.

We stress the importance of involving all the stakeholders, who have an important role in protecting the rights of victims of domestic violence, in the process of adjusting the Regulation. The group of experts that drew up a series of proposals to amend the Regulation took into account, first and foremost, the needs of domestic violence victims, the difficulties faced by professionals in the field and the relevant international standards. The Regulation of forensic assessment of the severity of bodily injury was drawn up in 2003 and was amended only once, in 2011.





RESEARCH  
RESULTS  
ARE USED FOR  
ADVOCACY  
PURPOSES

## ■ INSTITUTIONAL ADVOCACY TO PREVENT AND COMBAT VIOLENCE



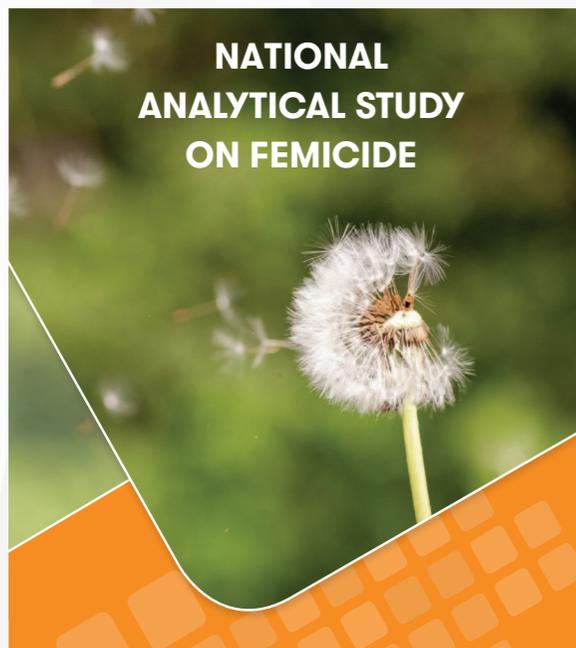
✓ WLC was invited to participate in parliamentary committee meetings as a human rights advocate and mainly to explain the provisions of the Istanbul Convention and the potential benefits of ratification.

✓ The Council of Europe invited the WLC to participate with a speech and a presentation at the International Conference dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Istanbul Convention, held in May 2021.

## ■ STUDY 'EVALUATION OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES'



The study outlines the barriers victims of domestic violence face when trying to get a coordinated response from the criminal justice system. At the same time, the authors of the study set out to identify positive practices that can be piloted at the national level, as well as the information and training needs of criminal justice professionals. The results of the evaluation will help develop a training concept, in mixed groups, which will include justice professionals, such as: forensic doctors, prosecutors, judges, criminal investigation officers, district police officers, lawyers providing state-guaranteed legal aid and probation officers.



## ■ WLC LAUNCHED THE FIRST NATIONAL STUDY ANALYSING FEMICIDE CASES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA.

The analysis of femicide cases for the years 2016-2019 has a wider applicability than the analysis of gender-based and domestic violence. The aim is to identify the national context and trends, to provide a concise overview describing the phenomenon, its prevalence in the country, the different social contexts in which the phenomenon occurs and the predominant risk factors.



## ■ STUDY 'IMPACT EVALUATION OF SUPPORT PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT'

The study focuses on the analysis of recent programmes funded from external sources, which aim to stimulate the economic empowerment of women, including the vulnerable groups of women. At the same time, providing recommendations on making women's economic empowerment programmes and national policies more effective, so that they better target the most vulnerable groups and ensure the strongest impact.

The evaluation involved experts from the Independent Analytical Centre 'Expert-Grup', responsible for analysing the economic aspects of women's economic empowerment programmes, as well as professionals working at the 'Women's Law Centre' NGO, who analysed the social aspect of economic empowerment programmes for women from vulnerable groups.



## WOMEN IN DETENTION HAVE ACCESS TO LEGAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Although the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictive measures imposed throughout the penitentiary system, limited our access to offering our beneficiaries support for several months, in 2021, we managed to provide legal counselling to 109 women and psychological counselling to 24 women.

Also, we managed to organise one-day training sessions for 20 employees of the Rusca Women's Prison. The training was focused on observing the rights of women in detention and meeting their special needs.

# RESULTS OF THE SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME IMPULS

In 2021, five project proposals were submitted and selected for funding under the IMPULS Small Grants Programme. The projects were implemented from March to the end of December.

Of the five grant recipients, three are representatives of public authorities who also participated in the first year of IMPULS implementation, deciding to continue the work started in the first year and to implement projects to further develop and consolidate the results achieved.



## EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE AND BEST PRACTICES

- ✓ Women's Law Centre received the visit of the Swedish police delegation. We shared with our guests various information about WLC's work in the fields of prevention, protection of victims of domestic violence and multidisciplinary cooperation.
- ✓ WLC also participated in a mentoring workshop with the 'Necuvinte' Association from Romania to gain more experience in developing services for victims of gender-based and domestic violence. During the event, issues related to creating partnerships with the healthcare and forensic systems were described. WLC also gained extensive knowledge of external communication and new digital tools for promoting the organisation in new media.

## BUDGET OF 2021

The total expenses in 2021 amounted to **USD 776.505,66**.

The programme activities included the following components:

**USD 288,995.74** – Prevention Programme

**USD 102,374.14** – Protection Programme

**USD 93,483.20** – Policy Programme

**USD 14,699.74** – Women in Detention Programme

**USD 64,836.20** – Small grant programmes

**USD 18,688.20** – Organisational Development Program

## WLC PARTNERS

### GOVERNMENTAL

Superior Council of Magistracy  
General Prosecutor's Office  
National Institute of Justice  
Ministry of Labour and Social Protection  
Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Ministry of Justice  
General Police Inspectorate  
National Administration of Penitentiaries  
Forensic Medicine Center

### NON-GOVERNMENTAL

Members of the National Coalition  
'Life without Domestic Violence'  
Gender Equality Platform  
East Europe Foundation  
SOCIOPOLIS Investigation and Advisory Centre  
Institute for Family and Social Initiatives  
Expert-Grup Independent Think Tank  
Global Rights for Women  
Women Against Violence Europe

### FUNDERS

Sweden  
OAK Foundation  
Sigrid Rausing Trust  
UN Women Moldova  
UNDP Moldova  
ABA ROLI  
Swiss Philanthropy Foundation and ARC Romania

