NEWSLETTER no. 42 (2025) STOPVIOLENCE



WOMEN'S LAW CENTRE

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PARLIAMENT ADOPTED ADDITIONAL LEGAL AMENDMENTS AIMED AT PROTECTING WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM VIOLENCE

WLC welcomes the adoption of Draft Law No. 70 in the final reading on 10 July 2025, which improves the national legal framework on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

The most important amendments include:

- Criminalising digital violence and adding a new article to the Criminal Code - Acts of persecution (Art. 1691), which will allow perpetrators who stalk a person using information technologies to be held criminally liable;
- Criminalising forced marriage (Article 1671), with an aggravating circumstance in offences committed against children;
- Enabling victims of digital violence to seek protection measures, including ordering perpetrators to delete abusive content from devices;
- Extending the duration of the protection order to a maximum of six months;
- The General Part of the Criminal Code was supplemented with the concept of femicide, for a better understanding and investigation of crimes committed on gender grounds.

We consider that, through this draft law, the authorities have taken important steps towards aligning the legislation of the Republic of Moldova with the standards of the Istanbul Convention.

At the same time, we regret that this draft law omitted a large part of the lex ferenda proposals included in the third Report on the analysis of the compatibility of the legislation of the Republic of Moldova with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. This report was drawn up by WLC at the request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) in 2024.

It is important to recall that the proposals in Annex No. 1 to the above-mentioned Report were based on the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, GREVIO General Recommendation No. 1 on the Digital Dimension of Violence against Women, as well as observations from the GREVIO evaluation report concerning legislative and other measures taken at national level to implement the Istanbul Convention.



These proposals include: fully incorporating the notion of lack of freely given consent in cases of rape and sexual violence into the Criminal Code; defining online sexual harassment; recognising forms of intimidation and psychological isolation of victims; criminalising female genital mutilation; excluding the contravention-based approach to domestic violence in favour of a more comprehensive criminal law approach; and adding aggravating circumstances to a number of offences so as to ensure cases of femicide are criminalised, in line with the standards of the Istanbul Convention.

A piecemeal approach to the proposed amendments could undermine the effectiveness of the violence prevention and combating mechanism, and risk leaving some cases of domestic violence and violence against women without prompt intervention and diligent prosecution.

WLC will continue to monitor the legislation implementation process and will advocate for the completion of the legal framework in line with the standards of the Istanbul Convention, so that every woman and girl in the Republic of Moldova benefits from real and effective protection against all forms of violence.

POLICE OFFICERS TRAINED TO RESPOND **EFFECTIVELY TO CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST** WOMEN

The way the police respond to cases of violence decisively influences whether victims will seek help and continue to assert their rights. A prompt and professional response may stop the cycle of violence and offer protection and hope to victims of violence.

Between 14 and 18 July 2025 in Chişinău, 20 police non-commissioned officers (women and men) from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) participated in a five-day intensive training course, delivered by trainers from the Integrated Law Enforcement Training Center (ILETC) and WLC experts, which focused on bestpractice responses to cases of domestic violence and violence against women.

- Understanding the phenomenon of violence and the dynamics of domestic abuse:
- Effective intervention and victim protection, including communication with victims and perpetrators;





- - The legislative framework and policing procedures, including the issuing





of restraining orders and tactics for investigating offences;

- Providing support and referring victims to specialised services;
- Case management and the prevention of reoffending through record-keeping and monitoring.

The course was organised by WLC and the Integrated Law Enforcement Training Center (ILETC) of the "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), with financial support from Sweden.



Key perspectives of professionals who respond to situations of violence

- Nothing justifies violence the abuser bears responsibility for their actions;
- Assessment of the victim's behaviour must take into account the cycle of violence and the power and control wheel;
- Violence and family conflict are two distinct situations;
- It is essential to consider the power dynamics in the relationship.

WOMEN DETAINEES FROM RUSCA PENITENTIARY NO. 7 BENEFIT FROM READING THERAPY PROVIDED BY THE WLC TEAM

On 12 August 2025, we marked the end of the Therapeutic Reading Club at Rusca Penitentiary No. 7. During seven sessions, 55 women detainees discovered the power of words and sharing, learning that even beyond the walls, there are spaces for hope and meaning.

The club was not just about books. It was about the courage to look within, about gratitude, and about feeling alive again. Each session was a window to hope, and at the final meeting, the women shared wishes and thoughts that inspire us:

"I would like to be able to attend such sessions again, Thank you,"

"I am very happy that you came. I would like you to come again to continue the club."

"In future, it would be good to have one club for Russian speakers and one for Romanian speakers, so that everyone has more time to be heard." "I believe you did everything possible to make us feel comfortable."

To ensure that the stories don't stop here, we left a collection of books in the penitentiary library, chosen by the women themselves, so that they can continue this journey of rediscovery through reading.

We thank our psychologist colleagues from the Institute for Family and Social Initiatives, who guided these activities, and the women who had the courage to participate.

The therapeutic reading club was organised by the Women's Law Centre, in partnership with Rusca Penitentiary No. 7, with financial support from Sweden, between 27 May and 12 August 2025.





WLC LAUNCHED A SUPPORT GROUP FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE - A SAFE SPACE FOR HEALING







Sometimes healing begins in silence. In a circle of women who know how it feels to carry pain within and still move forward.

WLC launched a support group for survivors of violence, beneficiaries of WLC's services. A safe, confidential space where emotions may find their voice – without fear, without judgement.

Grup de suport
pentru supravieţuitoarele violenței

Seven sessions took place between June and September, each bringing more confidence, hope and light to the women's healing process.

In one of the meetings, participants were guided through an exercise to reconnect with their bodies, expressing deeply hidden emotions and sensations through drawing. It was a profound process that helped raise personal awareness and gradually release the pain.

After the session, one of the participants shared a thought that touched our hearts:

"Today, through the experience offered by WLC, I understood how important it is to listen to our bodies and our intuition. Every sensation, every emotion has a message for us – it's just that sometimes we forget to truly hear ourselves. I thank Ms Tatiana from the bottom of my heart for her organisation and dedication, and Ms Gabriela for the gentleness with which she guided us towards our own presence. I leave more aware, more connected and more grateful. With an open heart, thank you!"

These meetings do not erase the pain, but they make it easier to carry. They remind women that they are not alone. That support exists. That gentleness exists. That there are places where women can breathe safely again.

The support group will continue in the coming months, guided by psychologist Gabriela Popenco from the Institute for Family and Social Initiatives (IFSI) and by Tatiana Timotin, a vocational counsellor at WLC.

The program is carried out with the support of the Association for Community Relations.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS IMPROVE THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION

Violence against women is a serious human rights violation and a consequence of gender inequality in the Republic of Moldova. Over 63% of women and girls aged between 15 and 65 have been subjected to at least one form of violence in their lifetime. Annually, around 24 women die as a result of domestic violence.

Despite legislative progress, the proper application of the law remains essential to ensure real access to justice for victims of domestic violence and violence against women.

In this context, in September 2025, WLC organised two seminars for justice professionals, in partnership with the Council of Europe and the National Institute of Justice, and with the support of Sweden:





5 September: 24 women specialists – judicial assistants, court clerks and advisers to prosecutors – explored the Istanbul Convention as a key instrument in preventing and combating violence, and discussed how to tackle gender stereotypes, protection measures for victims, the criminalisation of violence, effective sanctions for perpetrators, and ECHR case law.



12 September: 14 judges and prosecutors delved into the same topics and analysed the application of criminal prosecution practices, victim safety during proceedings, and the recommendations of the GREVIO expert group for Moldova.







The seminars were organised under the Council of Europe project "Supporting the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova – Phase II", in partnership with the Women's Law Centre, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), and with financial support from Sweden.



WE CELEBRATE THE WOMEN IN THE "TRANSFORMARE" ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

On 23 September 2025, Glia Impact Hub hosted the event "Transformation Starts with Me" – a celebration for women benefiting from the "TransFormare" Voucher Program.

The initiative is part of a broader economic empowerment program implemented by the Women's Law Centre (WLC), in partnership with UN Women Moldova and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, with financial support from Sweden, in the districts of Soroca, Hînceşti, Teleneşti, Bălţi and Ştefan-Vodă, from November 2023 to February 2026.

Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, WLC Executive Director

"Today we are together to celebrate the wonderful women survivors, to support their courage to embark on the path of transformation, their strength to try and succeed, and their desire to make the world a better place."





Maria Tropp, Head of the Development Cooperation Section at the Embassy of Sweden

"For survivors of violence, it is important to create pathways to healing and independence. Through support programs that combine social and economic inclusion, survivors are offered safety as well as new opportunities. Providing financial education, developing skills and building economic autonomy are crucial. When women have access to the tools they need to lead and make decisions, they become independent."







Svetlana Andrieș, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Moldova

"This event is not only about the transformation of the courageous women participants in the program, but about the transformation of all of us – public authorities, development partners and communities. For us, each of your experiences is a source of inspiration, as it helps us to develop support policies and programs

tailored to the survivors' daily needs. You are our champions because you have found solutions and were determined to shape your own destiny."

Felicia Bechtoldt, State Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

"This event is not just a celebration, but also the joy of witnessing transformed lives and hope taking root again. In 2024, 300 women benefited from training, mentoring and resources to build a new life. Beyond the figures, these are stories of dignity regained and safety restored for them and their children."

The Director of Glia Impact Hub and host of the event, Dorina Ciobanu,

emphasised the role of the entrepreneurial community: "This hub was created for women and women entrepreneurs and to advance gender equality. We invite you to work with us, participate in our programs and discover the power of collaboration and solidarity among women."



Stories of transformation.

One of the most emotional moments was dedicated to the stories of the beneficiaries of the "TransFormare" voucher program.

Thanks to the economic empowerment program, **Ana Busuioc** is living her childhood dream. The voucher allowed her to take a tailoring and design course: "The 'TransFormare' program told me: 'Now is the time'." For six months, step by step, I sewed not just fabric, but also my confidence. From being afraid to press the sewing machine pedal, from pricked fingers and trembling nerves, today I can proudly wear my first suit. It is a suit that is not just a garment, but the beginning of a new path."

For **Tatiana Hadîrcă**, the program was the starting point for personal and professional rebuilding. She is the founder of the Foreign Languages Centre in Sîngerei, where children and adults learn English and Italian through modern, interactive methods.

These are just a few of the 24 stories that show that, when women are supported, entire communities grow together.

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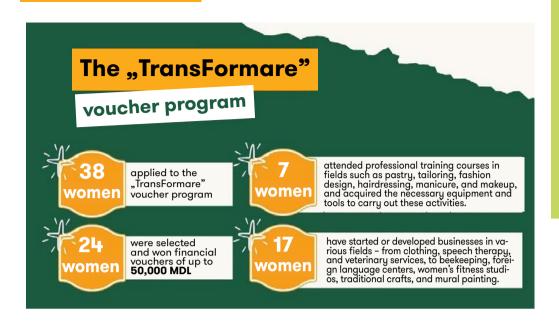


The event ended with an **awards ceremony**, where the beneficiaries received certificates of appreciation and took part in the symbolic **"Tree of Transformation"**, a painting where each participant left an imprint of her own transformation.

Results of the economic empowerment program in numbers









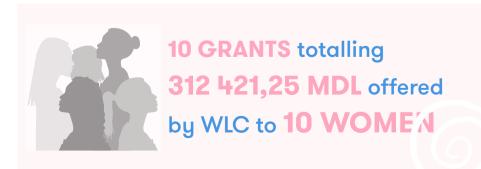
The event was organised in the context of the "Supporting Multi sectoral Efforts to Prevent Violence against Women and to Deliver Comprehensive Assistance to Survivors in Moldova, including through Economic Empowerment Programs" project, implemented by the Women's Law Centre (WLC) in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, UN Women Moldova, and with the financial support of Sweden.

REFUGEE WOMEN AND SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE RECEIVED GRANTS PROVIDED BY WLC TO DEVELOP THEIR BUSINESS IDEAS

Eight refugee women and two women from the local community turned their dreams into reality, thanks to the economic empowerment program launched by WLC.

The program was part of the project "Economic empowerment of refugee women and women from the host community through services tailored to their needs", implemented by WLC with the financial support of the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

After completing the training program conducted in Bălţi and Chişinău and focused on two modules – personal development (2 days) and entrepreneurship (3 days) – the participants developed business plans. Ten of them received grants to launch or develop their business ideas. Another nine women had the chance to attend Romanian and English language courses.



Stories of courage and reinvention



Ecaterina, a refugee from Ukraine, launched a professional cleaning services business in Bălţi. She invested the MDL 33,823 grant in equipment and supplies needed to expand her company's services.



Ala* is a survivor of domestic violence. Thanks to an MDL 30,500 grant, she modernised the clothing workshop she set up in Chişinău, purchasing modern equipment and furniture. More than 50 clients visit the workshop each month and receive personalised services.



Galina, a refugee from Ukraine, founded a child development center in Chişinău that also serves children with special needs and those from vulnerable groups. To meet the acute need for speech therapy services, Galina aims to create a specialised clinic for speech therapy and defectology, much needed by children with developmental difficulties. With the help of an MDL 23,936 grant, she purchased furniture and teaching materials.

Maria, with over 10 years of entrepreneurial experience in Ukraine, opened a beauty salon in Bălţi. This business has become a space of support and learning for refugee women and those from the local community. She received an MDL 33,800 grant, which she invested in furniture and equipment.



Svetlana, a refugee passionate about beekeeping, continues her family tradition in a district of Moldova, with an apiary where she produces natural honey and bee products. The MDL 33,651 grant enabled her to purchase equipment that helps her develop her business and bring new products to the market.





After **Maria** came to Moldova, she started working as a masseuse in a beauty salon in Bălţi. However, her clients today may benefit from modern, non-invasive body remodelling, relaxation and rehabilitation therapies. With WLC's support, she obtained an MDL 33,601 grant, which she invested in professional equipment, furniture and training courses.

Olena came from Ukraine together with her two children and her mother. Her relocation meant a new beginning full of challenges but also the chance to turn her passion into a successful career. Olena opened a studio in Bălți offering beauty treatments. Her next step is to open a cosmetology clinic, where she can offer state-of-theart services using modern technologies for skin care. Thanks to a grant of MDL 31,575, she procured equipment and furniture to fit out the cosmetology salon.



Diana, a mother of five children, may look like an ordinary woman, but inside she is a fortress who has withstood 15 years of violence. Since turning to WLC, she has been part of a wave of profound transformation. Thanks to a grant of MDL 26,562, she took a tailoring course and purchased equipment to practise her profession. Diana began to provide clothes repair services to her fellow villagers, thus securing an additional source of income.









In Chişinău, **Alla** created a place where children of all ages may engage in educational, logic-based, creative and theatrical activities. From puppet theatre and logic games to speech workshops and transformative games – each activity is designed to provide little ones with the space to discover and cultivate their own abilities. She invested the MDL 32,424 grant in technical equipment and games needed to equip the centre.



Irina, arrived in Moldova in 2022 and had to rebuild her life from scratch. She managed to set up a salon where she offers manicure, pedicure and massage services. She received a grant of MDL 32,549, which allowed her to take specialised courses and purchase professional equipment and furniture for her salon.



Through this project, WLC supports refugee women and victims of domestic violence in rebuilding their lives, starting or developing their own businesses, and obtaining a stable source of income.

THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM - A STEP TOWARDS REBUILDING FOR WLC BENEFICIARIES



Fifteen WLC beneficiaries took this brave step by participating, between 13 September and 12 October 2025, in the personal development program, part of the economic empowerment program.

During one month, participants met every weekend and had the opportunity to discover their personal and professional resources, acquire new knowledge and skills, and set goals for a more secure and balanced future.

The program is structured into five modules:

- Personal identity and self-esteem
- Conflict and stress management
- Setting personal and professional goals



- Non-discrimination and protection mechanisms
- Communication and harmonious relationships

What does this program offer survivors of violence?

- the opportunity to build the career they want
- the ability to negotiate a salary they deserve

- the ability to manage the money they earn with greater confidence
- self-confidence to rebuild their lives
- the opportunity to start income-generating activities
- stress-management skills
- a network of support and encouragement from other women who have been through similar experiences

"Thank you, WLC! Here I began to feel that I have value, after all. I haven't felt that until now."

"It feels as if I can see a different future; I have many wishes, and I can breathe more easily!" "I realised how important it is to discover myself.

I no longer want to feel as if I'm in a box and look through a little hole.

I no longer want to survive; I want to live, to live well, to be free!"

"I felt like a growing child who had what she'd always needed - care and attention - and was heard without criticism."

"As if my eyes have opened, as if I have wings. I've realised that everything I do, and the effort I invest in myself, cannot fail to yield results!"



"I want to be free and strong! I no longer want to be silent! I've realised I have something to say! I want to read more and learn more! I want to find the words so I can defend myself! I no longer want to freeze with fear — I can defend myself!"

"Over these past few days, we got to know each other: we played, we cried and laughed, we hugged, we moved. I realised there is a way out of conflict, regardless of the situation."

The program was organised by WLC with financial support from Sweden.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, elected First Vice-President of GREVIO

WLC's Executive Director, Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, was elected First Vice-President of GREVIO – the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – at the group's 36th meeting, held in Strasbourg.

This achievement is the international recognition of Angelina's commitment, expertise and professionalism in defending women's rights, and a valuable opportunity to bring the voice of the Republic of Moldova to the forefront of international efforts to prevent and combat violence against women and gender-based violence.



The new GREVIO Bureau comprises:

Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou - President

Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari -First Vice-President

> Aleid van den Brink -Second Vice-President

The mandate of the new leadership began on 30 June 2025 and runs for two years. GREVIO is the international monitoring body for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. It assesses how member states apply the Convention's provisions, draws up evaluation reports, formulates concrete recommendations and may initiate special investigation procedures.

Capacity-building workshop for members of the Lethality Commission

On 25-26 July in Chişinău, the Council of Europe organised a workshop for the members of the Commission for Monitoring and Analysis of Cases of Domestic Violence Resulting in Death or Serious Bodily Injury (the Lethality Commission).

WLC's Executive Director, Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, facilitated the session alongside international experts Biljana Brankovic and Justyna Hejman-Mancewicz.

The 22 participants explored:

- The Istanbul Convention as an instrument for preventing violence;
- International standards for measuring femicide;
- The effectiveness of the national data collection form;
- Analysis of European Court of Human Rights judgments and methods for analysing lethality cases.





The workshop was organised under the project "Support for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova – Phase II".

NBS prepares a new national survey on violence against women in the Republic of Moldova

ÎBetween 22 and 23 July, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) held a workshop on preparing a new statistical survey on gender-based violence in the Republic of Moldova, planned for 2026.

This survey follows on from the first national study "Violence against Women in the Family", carried out in 2010 and developed by the National Bureau of Statistics with partners' support. The study was a turning point in highlighting the realities experienced by women in the Republic of Moldova, showing that 6 out of 10 women have faced at least one form of violence since the age of 15.

Eleonora Grosu, Program Director at WLC, participated in the workshop as a civil society representative.



"Repeating the study on violence against women is essential to gain an in-depth understanding of the scale of this phenomenon. The data not only highlight the reality experienced by women and the multiple forms of violence to which they are exposed – including new forms such as psychological and digital violence – but also become a vital tool for developing effective policies, adequate support services, and a robust response from the justice system. Without these data, women remain invisible," Eleonora Grosu noted.



We developed a guide for women and girls for a life free from violence

The Women's Law Centre, in partnership with UN Women Moldova and with support from Sweden, has produced a practical guide for women and girls who want a life free from violence.

The guide is useful for women and girls who:

- want relationships based on equality and respect;
- want to better understand their story or the experiences they are going through;
- need support to say "NO" to violence.



In this guide, women and girls will find the following:

Recognition of the dangers of violence – forms of abuse and warning signs;

Options for their safety – what to do in an emergency, how to make a safety plan and how a restraining order or a protection order works;

Useful resources – contact details of organisations that provide support, to help them take steps towards a safe, violence-free life.

The guide is available here in Romanian and Russian. Share the guide with those who need this information.

GUIDE IN ROMANIAN

GUIDE IN RUSSIAN



WLC participates in the meeting of the Eastern Partnership Working Group for Gender Equality, organised by the European Commission



Women's access to justice and combating violence against women were at the center of discussions at the fourth meeting of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Working Group on Gender Equality, organised by the European Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova, and hosted for the first time in Chişinău on 29–30 September 2025.

Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, WLC's executive director, participated in the event, highlighting the important role of civil society organisations in facilitating access to justice for women affected by violence and discrimination, including refugee women.

"Survivors often face stigmatisation and fear when seeking justice. That is why awareness-raising across society and training for professionals are essential. Limited access to funding for NGOs that support victims remains a major obstacle. In Moldova, this funding is provided almost exclusively by donors, without sustainable support from the government. The lack of a sustainable funding model limits long-term initiatives," said Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari.

The event brought together representatives of EU institutions, civil society, gender equality experts, and authorities from the Eastern Partnership countries and the EU Member States.



The 2% that bring 100% hope

WLC thanks all those who chose to redirect 2% of their income tax to support our mission.

Thanks to your contributions, we raised **MDL 29.877,60** this year through the "2%" designation mechanism.

This amount translates into tangible support for women affected by violence who turn to WLC at critical moments.

Each contribution was an act of solidarity and trust in the collective effort to build a society where every woman can live in safety, free from violence.

Thank you for turning 2% into 100% hope!

TOGETHER WE ARE CHANGING LIVES!

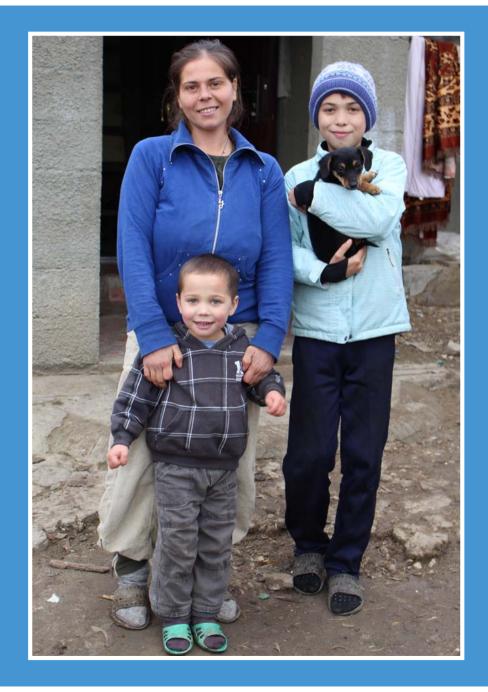
Every month, about **100 women** take an important step in their lives. Sometimes, this step is their last hope to be heard, understood and supported. Every month, about **100 women** choose not to tolerate domestic violence anymore and turn to WLC for specialist support.

We offer to these women legal and psychological support, social assistance, and opportunities for economic empowerment, so that they can step confidently into tomorrow. Our support is free and confidential!

You can also help women and children of Moldova. Visit the WLC website and make a donation to support victims of domestic violence. Every donation is a chance for these women to rebuild their lives. Every donation enhances the power of our community.









You have the right to live safely!

WHO ARE WE?

women's LAW CENTRE (WLC) is a non-governmental organisation founded by a group of women-lawyers from Moldova. WLC advocates for equality between women and men in the public and family life and helps prevent and combat domestic violence and gender-based violence against women.

The newsletter is issued with the financial support of Sweden and the OAK Foundation (via ARC).

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We are grateful to our funders















