



- Open letter for urgent implementation of the strategic initiatives assumed by the Government to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence -

To the attention of:

Prime Minister Dacian Cioloș,

Minister of Labor Dragoș Pîslaru,

Minister of Justice Raluca Prună,

Minister of Internal Affairs Petre Tobă,

Minister of Public Finances Anca Daragiu,

Minister of Health Vlad Voiculescu,

Minister of Education Adrian Curaj,

The Network for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, the Coalition for Gender Equality and the Network *Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence* are hereby making a public call for the urgent adoption of strategic initiatives on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, in the context of harmonizing national legislation with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention (Convention of Council of Europe on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence), ratified by Romania this year.

We demand urgent implementation of the strategic initiatives undertaken by the Government in January this year!

Violence against women is a violation of human rights and the result of unequal power relations between women and men. In its most serious forms, violence against women is a violation of the right to life. In the last decade, European countries have given priority to efforts aimed at reducing all forms of violence against women.

We believe that in Romania the government, central and local public institutions and civil society must intensify efforts to prevent and combat domestic violence and sexual violence and to give due consideration to all other forms of violence against women.

We believe that the state must act so as to ensure **the effective protection of victims, improve their access to justice and access to appropriate services, ensuring all their rights.**

Furthermore, we believe that it is vital that these efforts be supported by **allocating adequate**



financial resources from the public budget, as violence against women is a matter of public interest.

We believe that **legal actions toward the perpetrators and their application procedures are insufficient and convey the message that state institutions and their representatives tolerate violence against women.** The state cannot invoke the right to property or the right to privacy when, in their private life, aggressors commit acts which endanger the physical or mental integrity of a person.

We consider necessary to develop inclusive public policies involving a **multi-sectoral approach** and ensure that the rights of all women are properly observed. We can state that public policies regarding domestic violence are still symbolically adopted in Romania and provide no real safety for women. However, **violence affects women differently, according to the vulnerabilities they experience, often simultaneously, relating to their ethnicity, economic status, disability, sexual orientation, age or religious beliefs.**

We highly appreciate the introduction of the initiatives for *Amending the legislation on child protection and domestic violence* into the strategic sectorial objectives of the Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly, which represents a result of a **process of consultation and collaboration between the National Agency for Equal Opportunities and NGOs active in preventing and combating violence against women.**

These strategic initiatives undertaken by the Government are:

- **Implementation of the Convention of Council of Europe** on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Deadline: April 2016)
- Development of the legal framework for regulating the **interdiction / emergency protection order** which will grant police officers extension of privileges and grant them the necessary authority to issue such an order (Deadline: April 2016)
- Regulation of a **system for monitoring compliance with protection orders and implementation of an electronic monitoring system through electronic bracelets** (Deadline: May 2016)
- Supervision of the establishment of **Sexual Assault Referral Centers**, which would also ensure medical examination, forensic assistance and post traumatic counseling for victims (Deadline: September 2016)
- Drafting a Decision approving the **Programs of National Interest**, including a program that aims to create specialized services for aggressors advising and ensuring treatment for the different types of addiction, in order to facilitate their rehabilitation and reintegration (Deadline: September 2016)

We note that for the first three strategic initiatives cited above **the deadline for completion set by the Government has been exceeded.**

Once again, we strongly emphasize and bring to public attention the need for immediate implementation of these measures, given that:

- 1 in 4 women in Romania has been physically or sexually assaulted by their partner and 75% of these cases remain unreported (EU Fundamental Rights Agency, 2014).



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- 1 in 3 women has been subject to a form of violence at least once in their lifetime (EU Fundamental Rights Agency, 2014)
- Since 2012, 91% of requests for protection orders have been made by women.
- In 2014 there were 1,459 defendants prosecuted in cases of domestic violence, which represents 2.9% of all those indicted
- In 2014 there were 155 victims of homicide in situations of domestic violence, 32.5% more than the 2004-2012 average (according to reports by the General Inspectorate of Romanian Police and by the Public Ministry)
- Since the commencement of Law 25/2012 amending Law 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence until April 2015 7,312 protection orders have been requested and 3,045 applications have been accepted
- 7 to 14 days go by between the moment when police officers identify domestic assault, following a 112 call, and the registration of the protection order requests
- In 2014 and the first 6 months of 2015 there were 50,507 calls to 112 to report cases of domestic violence (family violence)

Considering all of the above, we demand with great urgency the following:

- Implementation of strategic initiatives cited on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, first and foremost:

- Developing the legal framework for regulating **the interdiction/ emergency protection order**, which will grant police officers extension of privileges and the necessary authority to issue such an order (Deadline: April 2016)
- **Regulating a system for monitoring compliance with protection orders and implementing an electronic monitoring system through electronic bracelets** (Deadline: May 2016)
- Supervising the establishment of **Sexual Assault Referral Centers**, which would ensure medical examination, forensic assistance and post traumatic counseling for victims (Deadline: September 2016)

- Systematic consultation of the three signatory Networks by representatives of ministries responsible for finalizing the strategic initiatives and monitoring their implementation.

- Completion of the Government Decision on the National Interest Programs (PIN) with areas which include equality between men and women, gender equality and domestic violence.

We assure you of our full support, given the expertise of all the NGOs members of the networks in preventing and combating violence against women.

The signatories of this open letter are:

Network for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women

www.violentaimpotrivafemeilor.ro

Network *Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence*

www.violentadegen.ro



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Coalition for Gender Equality

www.ongen.ro

Members of the Network for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, Coalition for Gender Equality and the Network *Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence* are:

Asociația TRANSCENA, București
Asociația Femeilor Împotriva Violentei ARTEMIS, Cluj-Napoca
Fundatia SENSIBLU, București
Asociația GRADO - Grupul Român pentru Apărarea Drepturilor Omului, București
Fundatia Centrul Parteneriat pentru Egalitate, București
Asociația pentru Libertate și Egalitate de Gen, A.L.E.G., Sibiu
Asociația Centrul de Dezvoltare Curriculară și Studii de Gen: FILIA, București
Asociația FRONT, București
Asociația ANAIS, București
E-ROMNJA - Asociația pentru Promovarea Drepturilor Femeilor Rome, București
Institutul Est European pentru Sănătatea Reproducerii – IEESR, Tg Mureș
Fundatia Centrul de Mediere și Securitate Comunitară - CMSC, Iasi
PAS ALTERNATIV, Brașov
Asociația pentru Promovarea Femeilor din România, Timișoara
Societatea Doamnelor Bucovinene, Suceava
Asociația ATENA DELPHI, Cluj-Napoca
Asociația „Victorie Împotriva Violentei, Abuzului și Discriminării – V.I.V.A.D.“ Cluj-Napoca
Asociația SEVA - Șanse egale – Valoare – Autoritate, Suceava
Asociația SPICC - Solidaritate, Participare, Incluziune, Comunicare, Cooperare, Timișoara
Asociația Quantic, București
Asociația All for Family, Constanța
Asociația Femeilor Universitare, București
Asociația VIS, Constanța
Psihosfera, Brașov
Equality and Human Rights Action Centre – ACTEDO
Romanian Women's Lobby
Societatea de Analize Feministe - AnA
Asociația PLURAL
Asociația EMA
Centrul de Studii în Idei Politice (CeSIP)

This open letter is supported by:

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