



WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE EUROPE

WAVE Network and European Info Centre against Violence
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TO: Romanian Government

Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and The Elderly

In the attention of: Minister Dragoş Nicolae Pîslaru

CC: National Agency for Equal Opportunities Between Men and Women

Subject: National Interest Program in the Area of Violence Against Women

The European network WAVE (**Women against Violence Europe**), with over 100 member organisations in 46 European states including Romania, congratulates the Romanian Government for the intention to set up a national funding program in the area of eliminating violence against women – a positive sign of commitment for the implementation of the *Council of Europe Convention for the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence*, recently ratified by Romania. WAVE is currently implementing a European-wide campaign funded by the European Commission, entitled **WAVE Step Up!** (translated in Romanian as PASI ÎNAINTE). The campaign is promoting the rights of women survivors of violence and their children to access support and protection throughout Europe and calling on governments to step up investments in specialized support services that work from a women's rights perspective and make a difference in the lives of survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence. We have learned about your initiative from our partner organizations in Romania and would like to offer to promote your government as good practice example in our campaign activity **Governments Commit**. As part of this activity, WAVE will promote decisions taken by Governments in Europe in 2016 and 2017 that further the rights of women survivors of violence and their children to access support and protection.

Violence against women and girls remains the most widespread form of human rights violation and it can be fatal - in 2012, an estimated 47% of all homicides of women were committed by a family member or an intimate partner. Our campaign started from the alarming fact that while 1 in 3 women in Europe experiences physical or sexual violence, many European states continue to ensure little or no access to adequate specialized support services like women's helplines, shelters and counseling centers including support centers for rape and sexual assault. The under-investment in adequate support has to do with the wide-spread victim-blaming, also responsible for the under-reporting of violence. Many societies prohibit such violence but tacitly tolerate it in practice, so women have no alternative and endure repeated violence. The costs of this repeated violence affect all of us. Independent support services that work from a gender-sensitive perspective are vital to enable women and their children to seek safety and empowerment for violence-free lives. Please see the attached campaign video for more details: <http://www.wave-stepup.org/step-up-news/162-news-3>

The WAVE Network appreciates your openness to cooperation with NGOs with long experience in the prevention and combating of violence against women present under the NGO networks **Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence**, the **Network for Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women** and **The Gender Equality Coalition**. Using direct practice to inform policy-making is a good premises for increasing effectiveness of public policy, both in terms of the types of services to be supported by the government funding program and in terms of the quality standards for service provision. Support services are much more than a roof over one's head: counseling and empowerment are crucial to helping survivors overcome violence. Basing service-provision on women's rights principles is a key to breaking the cycle of violence, as very often discrimination and victim-blaming discourage women and contribute to the status quo.

We are looking forward to your reply and kindly ask you to provide us with an official statement as soon the National Funding Program is published in order to make it visible on our campaign website www.wave-stepup.org. Photo and video material may be included.

We thank you for your engagement to ending violence against women and children and we would like to kindly invite you to share your work with other decision-makers and practitioners in the field at the WAVE Conference in Berlin 19-21 October 2016. Draft program is available here: [http://files.wave-network.org/home/18 WAVE Conference Draft.pdf](http://files.wave-network.org/home/18%20WAVE%20Conference%20Draft.pdf) as well as online registration: <https://wave-network.org/get-involved/registrations>

For more information on WAVE and the *Step up!* Campaign, please contact the WAVE Office in Vienna – email: office@wave-network.org, telephone: +43 1 548 27 20

Sincerely yours,



Maria Rösslhuber
WAVE Manager



Rosa Logar,
WAVE President

