



**Making a Difference to Women Activism  
Celebrating 20years –IWRAP Asia Pacific**

**CEDAW 67<sup>th</sup> SESSION**

**Report on discrimination and violence in the context of  
intolerance on the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and  
girls in ROMANIA**

I would like to present at the 67<sup>th</sup> session of CEDAW the situation of women in Romania from a point of view of discrimination, because 27 years ago I was the one who during the revolution in Romania I have abolished the communist forms of the women's movement and have founded the first democratic organization **The Women's Association in Romania (ASOCIATIA FEMEILOR din ROMANIA AFR)**, also because 10 years ago I have presented the shadow report at the 35 session of CEDAW at UN.

Thank you for inviting me again to show in this report the views of Romanian women who I represent!

**Asociatia Femeilor din Romania is the first democratic organisation for women** and was founded in the days of the Romanian Revolution in December 1989, as a result of the need to organize, represent and to protect the rights of women in Romania.

**The Women's Association in Romania (AFR)** purpose is to group all women in Romania together, regardless of their residence, age, nationality, religion, political conviction, profession, putting forward the awareness-raising of women when it comes to:

- Their responsibilities when participating in the economic, socio-political and cultural activities, as mothers and wives;
- Specific problems influenced by the society;

-Specific rights which women can benefit from.

AFR is a leader within the women's movement and it is fighting for a real status for the women in our country. We currently active in partnership with AFRI TOGETHER ,  
Our mission is to

### **Empowering women and advancing their rights!**

Since 27 years Asociatia femeilor din Romania (Womens Association of Romania) has a rich history in the field of combating violence and discrimination even before Romania's accession to the EU.

Our Association was the first national women's organisation established in Romania after 1989, with more than 27 years of activity in this field and about the practical ways in which women rights are ensured, guaranteed and respected in Romania.

In its 27 years of existence, AFR has developed national and international programmes and projects; held training courses and activities in women's support; organized advocacy seminars and campaigns in the areas of: civic education, health, gender equality, promotion of tolerance and non-violent behavior, elimination of poverty and discrimination, adult education and development of international partnerships.

The pragmatic approach gives the association a large audience within women. The activities of AFR are based on voluntary work.

The Association's programmes focus on inter generational knowledge offering opportunities both to young and elderly women in distress, living in disadvantaged areas. In this sense, the slogan of the Association is "**Help me to help you!**".

AFR coordinates a network of other national women organizations and is also a member of several international bodies concerned with the gender status and situation.

We are aware that empowering women and advancing their rights is not only the right thing to do for them, but it can lead to progress on a range of issues, including the fight against poverty, hunger and violence, disseminating information and supporting national efforts to advance women's rights and the prevention of and response to violence against women.

**We know that women play a key role in the struggle against poverty, violence , discrimination.** But their capabilities remain still unused. They do not have equal access to education, jobs and property , that is why Anti-discrimination is one of important objective of AFR working in partnership with and AFRI TOGETHER.

We make efforts by understanding discrimination, learning about diversity and sharing ideas on taking action against sexist, racist and homophobic remarks to change the Romanian society

In this sense, we have supported the National Strategy 2007-2013 organizing several activities of education in the field of human rights through conferences, round tables, campaigns, formulating points of view on national legislation and especially on the respect for women rights.

We have focused to advocate for the harmonization of the national legislation with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention being in contact with local and international NGOs and Civil Society in developing education and continuous programmes for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women making our contribution with respect to better policies for women's rights and gender equality.

We lobbied for the modification of Law 217/2003 regarding victims of family violence, especially campaigning for a highly needed Emergency Protection Order in cases of family violence.

The most important instrument for preventing discrimination is education and training through continuous and updated information. AFR contributed by its continuous education and training programs to the promotion of the fundamental human rights and equal opportunities for women and men advocated for the implementation of the European and the international mechanisms in the national legislation and for continuously informing the public and the decision making actors on the need to combat racism and discrimination, to facilitate access to education for all minorities, especially for the Roma population.

**One of the most important projects is its ANTI-DISCRIMINATION campaign! It is a permanent campaign with AFRI TOGETHER and RNOFR Network of women NGOs**

The report starts from identifying priorities concerning the situation of Romanian women at the national level in consensus with other Womens NGOs in several meetings .

All the information received was captured in this presentation!

It is not hard to make great efforts of observation, analysis and interpretation to find that, in a quarter of a century of change, the condition of the woman in Romania is not at all envied. Although we have laws that guarantee gender equality in principle, discrimination continues to work in all its plans, from social promotion and salary to public mentality.

Romania remains a traditional country in which women are still discriminated, both in terms of pay and limited access to certain professions, which are usually the best paid professions.

Due to the transformations in the transition period, Romania has witnessed an increase in social inequalities, a concerted action to combat deep-rooted gender stereotypes that define the roles of women and men in society and influence gender imbalances is important.

Discrimination against women in Romania has been particularly emphasized in terms of blocking women's access to various levels, including politics!

**There is the National Strategy for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, but unfortunately little applied in practice!**

What is about the national strategy for gender equality?

Why is this necessary ?It should have clear objectives, outline the role of public institutions, and establish monitoring indicators as well as public reporting mechanisms!

Previous analyses of gender policies in Romania have already identified important gaps between gender equality legislation and policies, and their implementation.

This missing link is related to how gender or equal opportunities for women and men were integrated into national policy and oversight.

### **Romania has signed and adopted a lot of international treaties !**

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, was signed by Romania in 1980 and ratified in 1982, and the Istanbul Convention (Convention on the Prevention of and Fight against Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence) Adopted by the Council of Europe in 2011, was signed by Romania in 2014 and entered into force in September 2016. Beijing Declaration of 1995 and the Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community 2007 were also signed by Romania

**The state actors**, which have to implement the relevant public policies on gender equality and education, are many: the National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (ANES) coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, the National Commission for Equality of chances (CONES) coordinated by ANES, the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD), the Commissions for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, coordinated by the Parliament, commissions in the County Councils and the City Council Bucharest activating in the field of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (COJES) and not only .

### **But ,civil society feels the need for a more effective partnership in the benefit of the community ,for respecting and applying the principle of nondiscrimination**

Last year, has re-established the National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women ANES at the pressure of women's organizations,with a great intention to be In dialogue with civil society, in order to achieve the objectives of the Government Program - Chapter 9 "Respect and dignity for women",by recognizing the importance of civil society involvement and involvement through NGOs and other actors in the social economy.

The competence and mandate of the ANES

1. Equal economic independence for women and men
- 2.Reconciliation of private life with professional life

3. Equal representation in decision-making
4. Eradication of all forms of gender-based violence
5. Elimination of gender stereotypes
6. Promoting gender equality

The women NGOs still waiting ANES to build a strong partnerships with them because the ANES mission is Promoting Gender Equality and Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence and we have a lot to do TOGETHER .

### **Identifying priorities: What are the major issues for women in our country**

#### **Information on the real situation of women**

- Romania recognizes the equality of chances between women and men at the level of legislation, but tradition still places the woman in a lower position than the man. Unfortunately ,Romania ranks last in the EU and ranked 72th in the world, according to World Economic Forum statistics when it comes to equality between women and men.
- Women in Romania continue to be preferred in poorly paid jobs and sectors, and their salary continues to be statistically lower than that of men employed on similar posts.
- Half of the female workforce in Romania occupies poorly paid jobs: administrative nurses, salespeople, low-skilled or unskilled workers. Data provided by the National Institute of Statistics in 2013 show that women still earn 8% less than men. In addition, women in Romania often face a refusal to work because of their age, regardless of youth or maturity.
- Mobbing at workplace/sexual harrasment Although many women are discriminated at work or in the recruitment process, few come to claim the various situations of discrimination and harassment they face.!
- If we take a look at the Romanian Parliament, we notice that only 11.81% of the country's legislators are women. On September 1, 2015, of the 383 deputies, only 53 were women and of the 167 senators, only 12 were women. And in other key decision-making positions in important state institutions, women occupy few places - out of 22 ministers, only 4 are women, and of 9 judges of the Constitutional Court, only 2 are women.
- One of the worst forms of inequality encountered in Romania affects women who, due to the lack of a functional social protection system, have to stay home to care for and support older or younger members of the family. This makes their social and professional life difficult, restricts their freedoms and opportunities, and leads them to depression, loneliness and low self-esteem, many married women and domestic women have difficulties in balancing their careers with family life. Many women in Romania take care of their own household and household chores, as well as of raising children, as regards the

care of the elderly, which is most often the responsibility of women, due to the lack of an elderly care system.

- **Violence and discrimination against women**

**Gender violence, especially among women, costs Romania 10 billion euros annually, or 6% of GDP**

**-What legislation has the State enacted to ensure women's equality in all fields (political, social, economic and cultural fields)?**

**Romania has great laws in favor of women !**

**Law No. 202/2002 on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men** This

is the key legislative tool and stipulates the following areas as priorities:

- Equality of opportunities and treatment for women and men in the labour market
- Equality of opportunities and treatment for women and men in access to education, health care, culture and information
- Equality of opportunities and treatment for women and men in decision-making

**Law No. 217/2003 on the Prevention and Sanctioning of Domestic Violence**

.Although the Romanian law recognizes the equality of chances between men and women, the tradition still places the woman on a lower position than the man.

Although many women in Romania face discrimination at work or when trying to find a job, few of them get to claim these situations !

Balanced participation in the labor market of both women and men - in terms of employment, pay, promotion and participation in lifelong learning - is closely linked to the family context.

Addressing this issue must take into account not only the economic dimension but also the socio-cultural dimension in which gender stereotypes are perpetuated, which most often lead to unequal distribution of economic and political power in society and a limitation of women's access In different spheres of social life, for example, in some professional areas considered to be "naturally masculine"

Access to material and financial resources, to education, to the labor market and to decision-making is closely linked and influences each other, implicitly translating The degree of democratization of the distribution of power between women and men at some point

Great laws on the papers which still waiting to become reality !

**-What is the situation with regard to the current mechanisms envisaged to ensure effective participation at all levels of decision making by women and girls, actions to increase the participation of women in political decision-making and in public bodies;**

There are specific intervention directions such as education, the labor market, social life, gender roles and stereotypes, participation in the decision-making process.

The strategy has been developed in the context of maintaining gender discrimination in society in the Romanian society and gender differences in access to, participation and involvement in the labor market, at the level of social, political, economic and cultural life

**-Have the national development plans in Romania addressed women's development and advancement on a scale that is representative of the population or women? In the national development plans (including poverty eradication strategies)**

40.3% of the Romanian population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion (compared to 24.1% of the European average) 6 and the share of women at risk of poverty or social exclusion was higher than that of men in the same situation (42.06% and 39.42% respectively).

**What we have to do?**

Specific objectives consist of:

- introducing the gender perspective in formal and non-formal education, combating gender stereotypes in the education system,
- reducing gender pay gap, encouraging reconciliation of family and professional life,
- promoting gender perspective in social life,
- raising awareness of the principle of gender equality,
- balanced participation of women and men at all levels of decision-making,
- implementation and monitoring of indicators developed under the Beijing Platform for Action,
- evaluation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy for by all institutions with responsibilities in the field.

But the vulnerable gender equality gaps identified in the strategy are low awareness of public policy and media outreach policies, lack of coherent provisions on dealing with complaints and complaints about gender discrimination.

These vulnerabilities are complemented by the threats posed by the economic crisis, the dynamics of the labor market, the poor promotion of social campaigns in the media.

**-What percentage of the budget in the national development plans is geared towards the goals for the development and advancement of women?**

I think is not enough, anyway nothing to develop the NGOs activity

**-There is enough of Re-introduce training on gender equality and anti-discrimination ?there is buget allocated for this purpose?**

Not enough, under pretext no enough funds for

**-Do the national development plans include specific provisions for specific groups of women in your country including rural women, indigenous women, disabled women, migrant women, minority women, refugee women and marginalised women in your country?**

Too few allocated funds, too few specific programs

**-Has the government involved NGOs in planning any of the above?**

Limited dialogue between civil society and government !

The dialogue between civil society and Romanian authorities is limited on women's issues and gender equality. Thus, there is a poor transfer of knowledge from NGOs and academia to politics and public decision making

**-Are there mechanisms in place to monitor the implementation of temporary special measures and to measure their progress in accelerating de facto equality for women?**

There is a lack of transparency in the civil service ,among the issues raised in the Romanian context are questions of corruption.

All about weaknesses in gender equality policies and in the national machinery !

**-What has the government done to overcome negative perceptions of women and stereotyping of women's roles within the family and the society?**

By acting to eliminate gender stereotypes, we act for equal opportunities between men and women. Unfortunately we are far from this reality!

The way in which women are treated in many areas of the media brings serious prejudice to their image and dignity.

One of the most important projects is its ANTI-DISCRIMINATION campaign! It is a permanent campaign with AFRI TOGETHER and RNOFR Network of Women Ngos

**-What policies or programmes is the government implementing to change prevailing mind sets among the population?**

It can not be said that we have completely eliminated from the social life inequalities of opportunity and treatment, discrimination, intolerance, lack of understanding and respect for the wishes and needs of those next to us.

Obviously, gender equality is a complex social process, determined in time and conditioned not only by objective factors (of which the economic ones are the most important) but also by subjective socio-cultural factors, of which traditions , Habits and gender stereotypes are most prominent.

That is why we can only welcome any initiative aimed at bringing to the attention of the public opinion the problems of women and proposing solutions to solve them.

**- How have gender equality campaigns addressed the issue of stereotyping of women and men and the roles that they play within the family and society?**

**NO more stereotypes of gender!**

Because

- influences human relationships;
- are very strict and serve to maintain traditional gender roles, gender differences;
- due to their unconscious nature they are particularly resistant to change;
- due to the real pressure exerted on individuals, causes them to behave in the prescribed ways that can have a detrimental effect on harnessing the potential of women and men.

In the present society, many gender stereotypes are reproduced and transmitted, which necessitates the opening of traditional, closed and outdated models, and an education approach that is useful to individual development.

As early as the first years of life, the girls are dressed in pink, the boys in blue, the girls' rooms are decorated differently from the boys, the girls are playing with a certain kind of toys, boys and other genres, so children learn that the man is always placed before the woman.

School emphasizes these stereotypes.

Predominantly female professions offer little chance of advancing into the organizational hierarchy.

As for the professional formation, the young girls are oriented towards "typical feminine" professions: hairdressers, hairdressers, shopkeepers, lighter courses for office work, secretarial activities, nurses, etc., while boys are oriented towards typical professions Masculine ": policemen, engineers, etc.

This typing implies an inequality: like the assistant woman of the male doctor, the secretary woman of her boss, etc

**NO stereotypes of gender !**

## **Violence and discrimination against women in ROMANIA**

**Violence and discrimination against women** and girls regarding women who have been subjected to trafficking in human beings or gender-based abuses / violence; to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence, in line with the Istanbul Convention; initiatives to address gender stereotypes in the education system and in the media

**Gender violence, especially among women, costs Romania 10 billion euros annually, or 6% of GDP!**

In Romania, in a society marked by violence, this phenomenon seriously affects family life. In Romania, 1 woman out of 10 is affected by domestic violence each year, regardless of age, civil status, ethnicity, religion or socioeconomic background. In fact, a woman is beaten every 30 seconds, and about 1.2 Millions of Romanian women know the violence in the family.

Ignored or officially unrecognized during the period of totalitarianism, violence has not only been revealed, but has also grown nowadays, amid declining living standards and increasing economic insecurity (the crisis).

In Romania specific detailed statistics are available especially for cases of violence in the family. According to the Romanian General Police Inspectorate, during the first six months of 2016 there were 9,000 cases of abuses and violence.

The Police recorded a number of 8,926 complaints of family violence.

Most of the victims were women (79%) while the aggressors are mainly men (92,3%). During the same period there were 81 cases of rape within the family (36% of rapes occurred in the urban area, while 64% in the rural one).

In 21% of the cases the victim is the aggressor's partner, and in 44,4% of cases the victim is either a son or a daughter, sometimes a step son or a step daughter.

All of these aggressors were men. It should be noted that these data refer only to the reported cases.

It is obvious that the unreported cases remain unknown. The victims lack confidence in the authorities while they are also afraid of the consequences they might face from their aggressors after reporting the violence.

There are many associations and organizations which lobby for an Emergency Protection Order which should be issued within 24 hours since the aggression. In the period January – June 2016, 440 minors were victims of aggressions or abuse, out of which 46% were boys and 54% girls.

**-What can we say about good practices and initiatives taken to combat multiple and convergent forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, If there is a policy or strategy to combat multiple and convergent forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls**

Violence against women is one of the most serious violations of human rights, in Romania, a problem of entire community, concerning social and public health.

**We must take action.**

Because it's the only way to produce a positive and long-lasting change in the mentality, in our society We must convince the women that it isn't normal to be hit, humiliated, blamed, isolated from friends and family, without access to money or not be allowed them to take decisions concerning their life. And especially, it's not normal for these things to happen in the family.

More serious is that more than half of Romanian people (almost 60%) tolerate violent behavior in the family and even consider it justified, women are still beaten, even killed!

Combating domestic violence and gender, there are also a number of NGOs dealing with case resolution, victim protection and / or post-traumatic counseling. "In the project" **Stop the violence in the family** ", we have taken into account the fact that many victims have reported the lack of reaction of the specialists with attributions in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence against the acts of family violence, as well as their lack of information regarding the services can be accessed by victims of intra-family violence

It is particularly useful to continue the implementation of information campaigns targeting these categories of specialists, to prepare them in the sense of providing the necessary information to guide the victim.

Romania ranks 7th in the European Index of Expenditure on Discrimination and Violence, drafted by the European Institute for Gender Equality (IEEG)

**-What legislation is in force to protect women against these forms of violence?**

**Law No. 217/2003 on the Prevention and Sanctioning of Domestic Violence** has been improved !

With the order of protection, the court can set several measures, there are about ten, among them being not to let the aggressor approach a certain distance or certain places where the victim is going.

In Law 217/20013, republished in December 2015 35% of homicides are committed in the family

In 2014, there were some 250 protection orders in Bucharest and almost 1,900-2,000 domestic violence complaints. The following year, the number of crimes doubled, with some 3800 and some of the family violence offenses and 260 orders of protection

That is why currently Women's Association of Romania in partnership with AFRI TOGETHER develops a national campaign,, "STOP Violence in the family".

People who feel vulnerable to be genuinely protected by the protection order victims are turning to these more drastic tools when I know they are degenerating domestic violence and reaching alarming levels. When they get there and I can not understand !.

There are people who make complaints and after they withdraw, the victim asks, only she can ask the court or the prosecutor. The policeman is just investigating the case for a particular offense.

Under the law that was amended earlier this year, the courts are required to deliver this order of protection to victims within three days, or they are afraid to do so, on the principle of "it is better to stand to endure." .

**What are the obstacles to women accessing the law and how can these obstacles be addressed? What are the measures taken to promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of women and girls who have suffered discrimination and violence?**

Women have not been protected by corruption, It is far more difficult for a woman to have a good and seif life, a good job, to build her career in comparison with men !

Because the situation is very serious currently Women's Association of Romania in partnership with AFRI TOGETHER is developing a national campaign ,, **"STOP Violence in the family"** .

Prevention is an important factor and therefore women should be offered the tools to avoid becoming victims of violence. One of these tools remains continuous training and education by organizing a series of conferences, workshops and roundtables dealing with gender stereotypes and discrimination, combating the domenstic violence

Every year, 25 November and the ensuing 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence which follow (ending on 10 December, Human Rights Day) are commemorated around the world, providing individuals and groups a chance to mobilize and call attention to the urgent need to end violence against women and girls!So, our Associations used this opportunity to develop several activities to sensitise public opinion and authorities about this phenomena .

**Romania must build a society less violent!**

We encourage women and men to work together and to involve the wider community in order to bring about lasting change in attitudes and behaviours.

We try to convince women that it is not normal to be hit, humiliated, accused, isolated by friends and family, without access to money or not allowed to make decisions about their lives. Unfortunately, many of them choose to keep quiet!

But the pain does not go away if the women are silent

And above all, it is not normal for these things to happen in the family and in a civilized society.

How strange is that 8.5% of Romanians think domestic violence is only for poor families, and 15.3% think that it is only uneducated people, but according to several studies, this is not true.

The worse is that more than half of Romanians (almost 60%) tolerate violent behavior in the family and even thinks it is justified!

### **We need to change the mentality**

Women prefer to keep silent and not to report any abuse when they feel and are discriminated in one way or another. Fear not to be dismissed, to be out of pay, to have problems later in your career and personal life, or to be seen otherwise by condemning them to silence! What to do?

It is necessary to act TOGETHER to eliminate gender stereotypes, to act for equal opportunities between men and women!

**-There is a budget allocated for this purpose, as a state body to deal with this issue?**

We consider the budget is insufficient and is not allocated to associations dealing with this issue for e.g AFR has conducted a national campaign to stop domestic violence on its own support, with its experts and in some cities with local authorities.

**-What other preventive and protective measures** have been adopted by the government to **eradicate violence against women** (such as training and awareness raising to modify gender-based stereotypes and socio-cultural patterns of behaviour that that legitimize, exacerbate or tolerate violence against women)?

**How effective are these measures?**

Most of these kind of measures have been adopted in frame of some European projects like Emergency phone, prevention guide etc

But unfortunately

- there are still not enough shelters, counseling centers, there are not enough infrastructure and support services available for women who are victims / survivors of aggression or abuses
- there are not locations for NGOs, where they would be possible to develop an activity to prevent the violence against women, to educate community in spirit of nonviolence, to give the support for victims of violence

**-Are women able to access these services? What are the obstacles for access and use of these services and how can these obstacles be addressed?**

- There are few funds offered to the organizations of women for projects to prevent and combat violence against women
- There is a need for education of women, support should be provided to organizations being encouraged to take over and develop services for victims, counseling aggressors, need to change mentality in rural areas

## Proposals and recommendations

- It is important the partnership public non profit become reality
- It is important to develop the support of nonprofit sector to NGOs
- Promote on media the informations relating to domestic violence, operating within the meaning of preventive intervention;
- Raise awareness on the existence of domestic violence and the importance of stopping the abuse;
- Increase the degree of financial independence for women and the personal autonomy that will make less bearable and acceptable the partner violence;
- Increase the financial support offered by financing programs of NGOs of women that carry out projects for the purpose of combating domestic violence.
- combating the marginalization and social exclusion of women abused;
- social integration in micro and macro groups of women with a high degree of social risk;
- strengthen the esteem of herself for a "woman abuse" and increasing the degree responsibility and social commitment of herself
- It is also necessary to organize debates, workshops, exhibitions and other actions whereby both public educational institutions and non-governmental organizations can jointly promote human rights through interactive methods and lead to change and / or mentalities formation, it is necessary to allocate funds, for awareness-raising and information campaigns on, this issue should not be missed online.

We need to create a world where women and girls are safe from violence and exploitation, we need to align human-rights defenders, politicians, the business world, and the diplomatic community **around practical, creative solutions**. It is important **the call for a public hearing**, the involvement of women movement, that would give enough time for implementation of law related gender equality and to prevent any discrimination against women

**Together, we can overcome gender based violence and create a better world for ourselves and for future generations.**

Thank you for attention ,

Liliana Pagu

President of ASOCIATIA FEMEILOR DIN ROMANIA

AFRI IMPREUNA

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