

**Opening speech of Ms. Aurelia Grațîela Drăghici, Secretary of state  
of the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and  
Men**

**with the occasion of the presentation of the combined periodic reports  
7 and 8 of Romania**

**on the ONU Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of  
Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) before the Committee on the  
Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

**Geneva - 6 July 2017**

Thank you to the Chairperson Ms. Dalia Leinarte and the Rapporteur Ms. Lilian Hofmeister. Distinguished members of the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, ladies and gentlemen, please allow me to personally address, on behalf of the Romanian delegation, our greetings and thanks for the opportunity to present to you the combined Periodic Reports 7 and 8 of Romania. For me, it is a great honor to introduce the members of the delegation that I lead and to join you in a frank, open and constructive dialogue, that highlights both the progress made and the challenges and difficulties we continue to face.

The structure of our delegation is as follows:

Monaliza Elena CÎRSTEA – National Agency for Gender Equality

Gianina DIMITRESCU – National Agency for Gender Equality

Adrian PETRESCU - Ministry of Internal Affairs

Adriana VLAD - Ministry of Labor and Social Justice

Alexandra NEMEȘ – Ministry of Labor and Social Justice

Elena ȘOAVĂ – Ministry for Business, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

Oana PETRESCU - Ministry of Justice

Monica Vanda MUNTEANU - Ministry of National Education

From the perspective of the CEDAW, Romania, for almost 35 years, has undertaken the commitment and determination to eliminate discrimination

against women and to adopt the legislative measures, as well as other measures necessary to eliminate such discrimination under all forms and manifestations. Moreover, Romania signed the Optional Protocol at CEDAW in 2000 and ratified it in 2003. The period of reference for this report is 2006-2016 and, when it was drawn up, there were taken into account the recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee, on the occasion of the presentation of the 6th Periodic Report, as well as the list of issues and preliminary questions which was transmitted to Romania by the UN Secretary General in the light of the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee.

We can proudly point out that the commitment to compliance with the Convention is now reaffirmed at governmental level, through the vision of the 2017-2020 Governance Program, from which we can see that gender equality is a priority area in the proposed social model and that, for the first time, we can find a distinct chapter devoted to this concept - Chapter. 9 - Respect and dignity for women.

Constitutional provisions are the key prerequisite for creating a society with the same opportunities, rights and obligations for women and men and where differences between women and men need to be integrated, in order to ensure a real and steady balance. Starting from these premises, we can assert with conviction that Romania has made some important progress, as follows:

Since January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007, Romania has become a member state of the European Union, in which it acquired both the rights and the correlative obligations resulting from the European Union treaties and from the entire *acquis communautaire* (including those stemming from the Gender Equality Directives) which our country has taken over, harmonized thoroughly, and continues to adapt to their dynamics.

**National institutional mechanism, mechanisms for inter-institutional cooperation and partnership with the civil society**

From an institutional point of view, there is currently a stable institutional mechanism, namely the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (ANES), which acts as a national integrating body in the two areas of reference: equal opportunities and treatment between women and men and the prevention and combating of domestic violence, capable of developing effective policies and programs and addressing the challenges and complex vulnerabilities accumulated and generated throughout the time, both in the field of equal opportunities and in the prevention and combating of domestic violence.

Regarding the mechanisms of collaboration existing at national level, according to the Law no. 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, republished, the National Commission for the Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (CONES) is working under the coordination of the ANES State Secretary. This Commission is composed of representatives of ministries and other specialized bodies of the central public administration subordinated to the Government or autonomous administrative authorities, trade union organizations and employers' associations represented at national level, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, with an activity recognized in this domain, designated by consensus.

The Romanian Government has become aware of the importance of interinstitutional cooperation and the involvement of both civil society and so, from this perspective, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2016, the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Prevention and Combat of Domestic Violence was created by approving a Memorandum (in response to the Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention), as a body which must ensure the implementation of the Istanbul Convention through the co-operation of all relevant actors in the field.

The dialogue with civil society representatives has registered a high level of openness and active collaboration, and from this perspective, 17 protocols of collaboration have been signed with NGOs active in the field of gender equality and the prevention and combating of domestic violence.

We have the determination to continuously extend the area of dialogue and partnership and, in this sphere, a crucial role belongs to the national institutions and bodies (ministries, universities, companies, institutes and other associative structures), in the last 3 years having been signed a total of 26 partnerships.

### **Equal opportunities between women and men**

From the perspective of gender equality, we are glad to inform you that we are working on the new National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence, which will consolidate two pillars, one for each area of specific activity. The elaboration of the strategy will necessarily take into consideration the collaboration and consultation with all the relevant actors in the field: civil society representatives, ministries with attributions in the field, representatives of the associative structures of the local public administration, a dialogue with them having already been initiated, over which we have received a series of proposals.

A particularly important initiative in this area was the adoption by law, in 2015, of the National Day on Gender Equality, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May. This day acquires a special significance through the promotion of the fundamental values established by CEDAW.

Annually, starting May 8<sup>th</sup>, a series of actions are organized in the "Equal Opportunities Week for Women and Men" event cycle. This year, the "Open Doors Week - In Dialogue with Civil Society", opened up a bilateral, open and constructive dialogue between the representatives of the most important non-governmental organizations and the State Secretary of ANES.

In 2015, on May 8<sup>th</sup>, Romania joined the „**HeforShe**” **Campaign initiated by UN Women**, which aims at involving men through attitudes and actions to promote gender equality and fight against violence against women. The President of Romania is one of the 10 global leaders who have become champions of the "HeForShe" campaign and who expressed his public commitment to achieving gender equality.

Through an ambitious approach, two new occupations were introduced in the Occupation Classification in Romania - expert on equal opportunities and equal opportunities technician.

Romania, during the last years, has been an active presence of the sessions of the UN Commission on Women's Status. In 2016, within the CSW 60 - Romania hosted a side event with the theme - Gender Mainstreaming - New Elements on a European level - Expert on Equal Opportunities Profession - Engagement undertaken by Romania within the HeForShe Campaign. At the same time, Romania was represented at the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women by Mrs. Lia Olguta Vasilescu, Minister of Labor and Social Justice.

We are proud to expand the international cooperation dimension in the field of gender equality which has been strengthened mainly through the following activities:

- Accession of Romania in 2016 to the Partly Enhanced Agreement - European Center for Interdependence and Global Solidarity - North South Center/CNS.

- Between May 2015 and December 2016, Romania, through ANES, provided expertise in the Twinning Project "Support to the Implementation of Gender Equality" in the Republic of Macedonia, in consortium with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Portugal.

- ANES is part of the National Committee for the Organization of the World Conference of Francophone Women, to be held in Bucharest, this year, on 1-2 November, in cooperation with the World Organization of Francophonie (OIF) and under the high patronage of the President of Romania, having as theme "The Role of Women in Economic Development". The event, with approximately 450 participants from all francophone countries, will be premiered in Bucharest, its focus being on women's role in economic development, with a special interest on female entrepreneurs in Central and Eastern Europe.

We are convinced that we are motivated by the common desire to promote the female potential in the interest of the development and modernization of society as a whole, and we take this opportunity to address the honorable members of the Committee the invitation to participate in the works of this international event, your presence being an honour for Romania as a host country, but also a reassertion of global actions in the spirit of supporting the female potential as an essential factor in the development of society.

Although, so far, there have been many discussions on gender budgeting, no such initiatives have been implemented. This year, we can mark a premiere for Romania through the project entitled "Gender budgeting in public policies" which was submitted through the partnership between ANES, the „Corona” Iasi Foundation and the „Center for Community Mediation and Security” Foundation.

### **Domestic violence and violence against women**

By the Law no. 30/2016, Romania ratified the Istanbul Convention and, at present, the harmonization of internal legislation with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention is assumed to be an ambitious and complex approach to the reform of the legislation on domestic violence, mainly by modifying and completing the Law no. 217/2003, as a mandatory prerequisite for the implementation of measures in the field of prevention and combating domestic violence and violence against women set out in Chapter 9. Respect and dignity for women under the Governance Program for the period 2017-2020.

The central pillar of future amendments to the Law no. 217/2003 on the prevention and combating of domestic violence is the regulation of the provisional protection order according to art. 52 of the Convention, which seeks to extend the police's prerogatives in the sense of ensuring the protection of victims by immediately removing the domestic aggressor in situations of immediate danger. The regulatory model and the methodological norms and related procedures that will be elaborated for issuing and applying the provisional protection order are based on the

example of good practices implemented in Austria. Another important amendment is to regulate psychological violence as a crime with a prison sentence of 3 months to one year or a fine, as the case may be, with the possibility of transforming punishment into community-based working hours.

In order to provide financial support for the development of all the necessary means and tools for the enforcement of the legislation, ANES has developed a number of projects, which are in different stages of development:

- The predefined gender-based violence project, which aims at implementing the Istanbul Convention under the „Justice” Program financed by the Kingdom of Norway focusing among other things on the development of at least 8 assisting centers for aggressors, at the local level, coupled with the elaboration of working procedures and specialized intervention programs for aggressors in order to prevent the relapse of domestic violence acts.
- The VENUS project to combat violence against women and domestic violence will develop measures centered on the integrated and unified approach to social services, socio-professional and professional training of specialists in the field, in order to prevent and combat domestic violence at national level.

ANES carried out during the last 2 years , the project "National Campaign for Awareness and Public Information on Family Violence", through the Program "Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence", financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. The campaign was designed to ensure broad coverage, focusing on the existence and the utility of the free telephone line dedicated to combating domestic violence, 0800 500 333 as a public information vector.

We are proud to highlight a premiere for Romania, marked by the Corporate Social Responsibility Project on Domestic Violence that was developed in partnership, in 2016, between ANES and Carrefour Company and

consisted a wide awareness campaign of the fight against domestic violence, through the popularization within the Carrefour network, of the free telephone line dedicated to combating domestic violence.

### **Sexual Violence**

In light of the Committee's recommendations, sexual violence remains a constant priority of the Government, this concern being present by taking the measure aimed to setting up 8 centers of crisis for rape. Currently, for the celerity of the transposition of the Istanbul Convention, we have identified the solution to conclude partnerships with county hospitals located in county-based municipalities, representative for the eight development regions in the country, where Emergency Primary Units operate.

We are convinced that the education of current and future generations can be a key element for strengthening and enforcing the CEDAW provisions and, in this respect, ANES together with the National Authority for Disabled Persons and the organization ActiveWatch, implements the project „Justice has no gender” focused on gender violence (including sexual violence and violence against girls and women with disabilities) and gender equality through the development of educational activities.

### **Traffic**

By the new Criminal Code of Romania, which entered into force on 1 February 2014, all forms of trafficking in human beings in various forms of exploitation, child pornography, slavery and pimping are sanctioned in Chapter III and Chapter VII.

### **Women's access to decision-making in political and social life**

Although in Romania there is a talk of gender issues regarding the political and public life of the country ever since 2000, a first step was marked by the existence in 2016 of two legislative proposals on the establishment of these regulations in the local and parliamentary elections, with a minimum

gender quota of 30% for both women and men, as a condition for validating lists of candidates for parliamentary / local elections.

According to the analyzes elaborated by the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men regarding the participation of women and men in the political decision-making process, at the parliamentary elections held at the ending of 2016, the presence of women in the Romanian Parliament was 20,9% out of 12% in 2012. In the local elections in 2016, the women elected percentage was approx. 4.5% of the mayor, higher than the one in 2012 of 3.6%.

### **Protection of people with disabilities**

An important element of progress in this area was the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through Law no. 221/2010. By the ratification of the Convention, Romania has appropriated its values and principles to accountability the society towards the people with disabilities. In this direction, was elaborated, the National Strategy for the Protection of People with Disabilities "A barrier-free society for people with disabilities", which aims to create a barrier-free Romania for people with disabilities.

### **Education**

Regarding the application of gender equality in the field of education, the National Education Law no. 1/2011 introduced the principle of non-discrimination both in terms of training for students and adults, ensuring the equal access rights at all levels and forms of pre-university and higher education, as well as lifelong learning, without no form of discrimination, for all citizens of Romania. The national education system continues to face a number of vulnerabilities, the main ones being: early drop-out, abandonment and insufficient adaptation of education services to the needs of children. There are 300,000 children whose parents are working abroad, among the school population, there are 170,000 pupils in the V-VIII grades with at least one parent working abroad. In order to reduce these vulnerabilities, the state acts by: implementing a free after-school program,

named School after School, offering formal and non-formal learning opportunities for skills enhancement, remedial learning and accelerating learning through educational, recreational and leisure activities and it addresses both primary and secondary school pupils. Other support measures implemented include: free transport for all pupils, food and school supplies for vulnerable children.

Temporary special measures promoted annually by allocating separate places (1%) to young Roma for faculty admissions from all state universities, are intended to encourage the willingness to study and develop a successful career.

From the perspective of transposing the provisions of the art.10 of CEDAW, ANES has taken and continues to make efforts to include gender perspective and gender-based violence in the school curricula at all levels of education.

## **Health**

Between 2006 and 2016, considerable efforts were made in Romania to improve the health of women and children, in particular through the implementation of several national programs, as follows: The National Program for Women and Children's Health, which includes family planning measures and maternity without risk (Including in vitro fertility and embryo transfer measures), the National Infectious Diseases Surveillance and Control Program, which includes measures for the prevention and control of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, the National Program for the test Babes Papanicolau which includes early screening.

Despite the constant support of the national health programs, Romania faces major challenges in terms of the aging population and the continuing deterioration of health, with the healthcare needs increasing.

In 2014, the Romanian Government approved the National Health Strategy "Health for Prosperity" - an exhaustive document that provides changes at all levels of care, from prevention and primary care, to hospital and

rehabilitation services. The amount allocated to the health budget in 2016, represents 4% of GDP and reinforces the state's commitment to investing in the sector.

## **Sustainable Development**

From the perspective of the Committee's recommendations, we mention that in 2008 the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania Horizons 2013-2030 was approved, which aims at the accelerated modernization of the education and training systems, public health and social services, taking into account the demographic developments and their impact on the labor market.

### **Occupancy**

The National Employment Strategy aims to endorse the efforts to achieve the 2020 employment target set by Romania, 70% employment rate for the 20-64 age group. The strategy specifically provides actions to stimulate women's participation in the labor market, such as: developing infrastructure in order to provide childcare facilities and support services for the care of dependent family members, raising awareness about the flexibility of work schedules and the gender pay gap, combating gender stereotypes.

### **Social Inclusion**

The National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction 2015-2020 was approved by Government. Currently social benefits in cash or in kind are supported by financial redistribution measures and include: family allowances, social and special benefits to families or individuals, according to their needs and incomes. Actions in the social assistance field are governed by Law no. 292/2011 that regulates social assistance measures and actions without restriction or discrimination.

By a Government Decision approved the Strategy of the Romanian Government for the inclusion of the romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority which is correlated with the national objective assumed by the National Reform Program in order to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion with approx. 600,000 people by 2020.

### **Conclusions**

I will conclude my remarks on that point, and we will be glad to come back with details during this session and to answer at the questions raised by the members of the Committee.