

## **THE REPORT**

### **on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Republic of Moldova**

#### **The situation in the Transdniestrian region**

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## I. Introduction

This report was elaborated and drafted by two transdnestrian nongovernmental organizations - NGO "Center for support and development of civic initiatives "RESONANCE"" and NGO "Legal Informational Center "Apriori"". Center Resonance took the leading role in the process of analysis of the information and the preparation of this report.

**Center for support and development of civic initiatives "Resonance"** (here and after "Center Resonance") is an independent non-governmental nonprofit organisation, founded in December 2005 as a joint initiative of 10 active Transdnestrian NGOs (as per year 2005) by accepting The Memorandum on cooperation and joint support. The Center's core principles are democratic participation and inclusiveness, transparency, mobility, high level of provided services which are reaching through action, training and education, research and dissemination.

Center Resonance is one of the leading Transdnestrian NGOs working in the field of Gender issues, Women right's protection and youth empowerment in rural and urban communities.

The Center Resonance mission is to increase the level of social activity of the population in solving social problems of youth, women and social vulnerable people in the Transdnestrian region of Moldova.

Center for support and development of civic initiatives "Resonance" goes to achieve its mission through the work of interconnected four basic programs:

1. **Program on prevention from domestic violence and women's rights - Family center "Harmony" (operated from the year 2009);**
2. Non-governmental and regional development Program in Transdnestria;
3. Department of sociological surveys (operated from the year 2007);
4. Development of youth volunteer network Program.

**In the period 2009-2012 Center Resonance** implemented the project "Opening new horizons for women" with the financial support from the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and UNIFEM (UN-Woman today) which brought big awareness raising campaign on violence against women and for te first time in Transdnestrian region of Moldova created services for the victims of domestic violence. This problem become one of the core direction of the Center Resonance activity, so the organisation have a sufficient background in the sphere, it accumulates information on women's status in the region and provide analytical conclusions in this sphere, some of which reflected in current report.

**Non – commercial Partnership "Information and Legal Center "Apriori"** is registered in Tiraspol, Moldova (Transdnestria) in 2008. The main goal of the organization is to contribute to development of civil society in Transdnestria based on respect for human rights arising from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In 2012 NGO “Apriori” launched the implementation of the pilot project which aims to support the mothers – single parents. Before starting the project implementation and during the process of implementation the team of the NGO “Apriori” carried out different types of analysis the situation in this sphere. Some information and conclusions presents in current report.

This report doesn’t cover all issues of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**. **The main topics of the report are:** domestic violence (DV) and women – victims of the DV problem in Transdnestria, Women in labor market, Reproductive health and rights of women, Vulnerable groups of women: mothers – single parents.

In the process of preparation this report it was used information and data provided by others NGOs form the region (from urban and rural area): NGO “Women’s initiatives”, NGO “MirBych”, NGO “Interaction”, NGO “TASDI”, NGO “Choice of youth”, NGO Farmer association “White bridge”.

## **II. General analysis of the situation on the status of women in Transdnestrian region of Moldova**

The Transdnestrian region<sup>1</sup>, a part of the Republic of Moldova, is self-proclaimed as independent of the Republic of Moldova with its own judiciary and law enforcement system, currency and governmental structures. *De jure* it is considered to be a part of Moldova, *de facto* it is outside the State party’s control. The political status of Transdnestria is as yet unsolved and peace talks continue in the context of the “Permanent Conference on political issues in the framework of the negotiating process on the Transnistrian settlement” (the 5+2 format)<sup>2</sup>. These talks resumed in November 2011 after a long break.

Transdnestrian region of Moldova is a territory where most of international and national legal provisions of Moldova including in the context of fulfilling positive obligations of the state in the area of protecting basic human rights does not exercise for the population of the region. So that Moldova’s obligations under the international treaties and Covenants are not enforced in relation to the population of Transdnestria within the limits of its effective power. The real collaboration of the law enforcement agencies of Moldova and *de facto* Transdnestrian authorities is not regular and meet different obstacles.

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<sup>1</sup>There is also no unique definition in the determination of the place “Transdnestrian region” in the documents from international bodies and organisation, inter alia, in Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to Republic of Moldova the region is mentioned as “Transnistrian”, while at Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee to Republic of Moldova, in the documents from OSCE – is mentioned as “Transdnestrian”. In this paper the authors will name the territory as Transdnestrian region or Transdnestria which should be considered as equal.

<sup>2</sup> Moldova and Transnistria are the parties concerned. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Russia and Ukraine act as mediators. The European Union and the United States of America are observers.

In 2011, Moldova presented the combined fourth and fifth periodic Report on implementation of the CEDAW in the Republic of Moldova. **No information or statistics/initiatives on women's rights protection** and appropriate measures taken by the State to eliminate discrimination against women in political, public or private life **in the Transdnietrian region of Moldova** were provided at the official periodic report by the State. According to the CEDAW General Recommendation #23 which obliges States parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and implementation of policy at the international, national, regional and local levels. A few UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies' concluding observations made some general recommendations to the Republic of Moldova about the necessity of spreading and fulfilling international standards on the territory of Transdnietria. Namely, Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee to the Republic of Moldova (CCPR/C/MDA/CO/2, 4 November 2009) mention Moldavian Government's inability to exercise effective control over the territory of Transdnietria which continues to impede the implementation of the International Covenant on civic and political rights in that region. It notes, however, the State party's continuing obligation to ensure respect for the rights recognised in the Covenant in relation to the population of Transdnietria within the limits of its effective power. The same provision is done at The Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Yakin Ertürk in 2009 and Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to Republic of Moldova in 2003. However, little has been done by the Moldavian Government to follow these recommendations.

New approach according to which recommendations are providing not only to Moldavian Government but to de-facto Transdnietria authorities considered to be more effective and productive for the purpose to strengthen protection and promotion of women's human rights in Transdnietria. This approach appeared in the Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice on its mission to the Republic of Moldova from 20 to 31 May 2012 (A/HRC/23/50/Add.1), i.e. the Working group recommends to the Moldavian Government "to initiate cooperation with the de facto authorities of Transnistria and other relevant stakeholders to afford women in Transnistria greater protection and enjoyment of their human rights, and engage in joint cooperation and programmes to combat violence against women". Considering the recommendations addressed to Transdnietrian de-facto authorities, the Working Group suggest the following: "to apply a comprehensive regulatory framework on gender equality and women's human rights that meets international standards and use all available means at their disposal to protect and promote women's human rights and combat violence against them".

In 2011 the High Commissioner for Human Rights officially recognized the need for special focus to be paid to the protection of human rights (including women's human rights) at the territories which, for various reasons, controlled by the de facto authorities such as Transdnietrian region (18 th session of HRC in September 2011 and press conference during Ms. Navanetham Pillay visit to Moldova and Transdnietria in November 2011). Following this position, UN Senior expert on human rights Mr. Thomas Hammarberg made 3 filed visits in Moldova and Transdnietria during 2012 and provided a comprehensive report on the situation on Human Rights in the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova on February 2013 where he made analysis and provide some core recommendations about domestic violence and trafficking in human beings.

For the last six years, the process of strengthening the role of women at different spheres of everyday life and even at some stages of decision-making processes has intensified in modern Transdnistran society of Moldova. In the last three to five years there have been registered increases in the number of women who drive the car, the number of women who lead the small and medium business companies and women - entrepreneurs, the number of women at executive branch in Transdnistran – head of local departments and ministries (5 of 10 de-facto ministries in Transdnistran are lead by woman and newly appointed in July 2012 prime-minister is a woman too), and in the number of women represented at frontier guard and migration service.

Starting from 2013, new de-facto ministry of social protection and labour started to operate in Transdnistran, before this the issues of social protection were reviewed as a part of the jurisdiction of the de-facto ministry of health and social protection. In the newly created ministry there is a separate department dealing with the protection of rights for families, mothers and children. Informally it may be considered as a gender focal point ministry which capacities should be improved in the area of women's rights protection, providing social services to the victims of domestic violence, trafficking in human beings and building cooperation with local NGOs. Allocation of the issues of social protection in a separate de-facto ministry may create new opportunities for developing this area and overcoming obstacles on practical implementation of women's rights in Transdnistran and improving capacities of providers in addressing the problem that women and girls face.

However, the process of strengthening women status in public and private life in Transdnistran is aggravated by the absence of legitimate ground for its development (lack of legislation provisions for preventing gender discrimination, protecting from domestic violence, sexual harassment, regional programs on equal opportunities for women and men, gender oriented budget, etc. in Transdnistran region).

### **III. The situation of domestic violence in Transdnistran**

The problem of domestic violence in Transdnistran is rather latent. Women who are suffered keep the problem silent, the incidence of violence against women and girls, particularly within the family, remains largely underreported due to: shame; fear of social stigma; lack of knowledge about existing laws, judicial procedures and services; or simply because of lack of confidence in the system. De-facto Transdnistran authorities do not provide any services for the victims of domestic violence, this is only several NGOs in the region who are dealing with the problem and provide psychological, legal and social support to women and children who are in the situation of violence.

#### **Lack of gender-disaggregated statistics**

There is rather poor gender segregated statistics in Transdnistran. Official statistics do provide only general information: according to the last population census in 2004 the general population of Transdnistran is 555 347 people, among them women are 299 677 (54%), men – 255 668 (46%)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Annual statistic report 2004 prepared by The Bureau of statistics in Transdnistran.

Statistics as to 2012 shows that per 100 marriages accounted 59 divorces (3468 and 2057 respectively) which is higher on 0,1% to the coefficient of divorce (on 1000 of population) in comparison with the year 2011. Additionally, the data on the persons who committed crimes has only limited indicators disaggregated by sex: in 2012 out of 3848 identified persons who committed crimes (the Bureau of statistics in Transdniestria presented ranked distinction based on certain categories of persons which are), **621 (16%) were women** (the percentage of women committed crimes increased twice in comparison with 2009), 1975 – youth (under 30 years old), 2404 – unemployed, 1390 – previously detained<sup>4</sup>. At this point official gender-segregated statistics finished. According to the data presented by de-facto Ministry of internal affairs on 2009, 60% of crimes committed by women served sentence at women penitentiary institutions have been done because of family ground – they suffered for long-term domestic violence. During the discussion with women’s NGOs in Transdniestria, some representatives noted that 40 to 50 per cent of women in prison are there for killing their husbands or partners due to domestic violence. These cases are often not treated as self-defence nor are mitigating circumstances considered in the sentencing.

Consequently, the resources which experts have to use to update the problem of domestic violence in Transdniestria are basically analytical reports and sociological surveys from national and international NGOs. De - facto authorities *does not keep official data on the rate of domestic violence*. It is worth to mention that an essential role in collecting and keeping data belongs to national and regional NGOs, especially IOM, UNFPA, Center Resonance NGO, Women’s initiatives NGO, Interaction NGO.

According to the results of the sociological surveys in the field of reflection the problem of domestic violence in the public opinion in Transdniestria carried out by Center Resonance in 2009 and 2011 the following observations and conclusions have been done:

1. 22,3% of women in Transdniestria (every four women) living in marriage or with partner is being or exposed to different types of domestic violence;
2. Up to 60% of women living in marriage or with partner suffered from different forms of psychological violence;
3. More than a 50% of women who suffered from physical violence stated that the aggressor in this cases was their husband or partner;
4. More than 17% of population consider that the physical violence against women is justified in the case of adultery, more than 8% thinks that its normal even when the husband only suspects his wife adultery;
5. Women are most vulnerable to all types of the domestic violence at the age from 20 to 24 years, at the same time analysis of the domestic violence cases of clients who applied for support to the Center Resonance (more than 1100 clients for the period 2009 - 2012) shows that the average age of victims more than 30 – 35 years. This means that women who suffered domestic violence have to suffer for about 5-10 years before they come for services.

In the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, while there is no specific infrastructure for responding to domestic violence cases, UN Women, IOM, UNFPA has implemented a comprehensive domestic violence and counter-trafficking prevention and protection programmes in cooperation with

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<sup>4</sup> Annual statistic report 2012 prepared by The Bureau of statistics in Transdniestria.

several local NGO partners (NGO Women's initiatives, Center Resonance, NGO Interaction, NGO Perspective). In addition to hotline that provides confidential information on migration and trafficking and to informational lines on domestic violence issues, which has received almost 7,000 calls since its launch in 2006 on migration and human being trafficking and 5607 calls<sup>5</sup> since mid 2009 on domestic violence, the projects also provided legal and psychological assistance, vocational training, support with job placement, start-up grants for small businesses to women at-risk, seminars to social and medical service providers, raising awareness campaigns. The combined data provided by NGOs rendering services to victims of domestic violence, starting from April 2009 (it was for the first time when specialized domestic violence services were brought to Transdniestria) it was registered **2324 applications for services from victims.**

As it is mentioned in the Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Yakin Ertürk the lack of a centralized database on sex-disaggregated data and indicators on violence against women and on gender-based discrimination in general, the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of measures put in place for the achievement of women's de facto equality and the elimination of violence against women negatively reflect to the protection of women from domestic violence.

#### **Lack of domestic violence legislation at the local level in Transdniestria**

While Moldova adopted several acts on combating violence against women and promoting gender equality (the Law on Ensuring the Equality between Women and Men 2006, the National Plan for Promotion of Equality between Women and Men in Society for the period 2006-2009, Law on Preventing and Combating Family Violence 2008, the National Strategy to Ensure Gender Equality in Moldova for 2009-2015, Law on Equality 2012), none of these acts operate in Transdniestria nor the separate acts in Transdniestria have specific legal provisions on prevention and protection of women from domestic violence.

The problem of lack of applicable anti-domestic violence provisions in Transdniestria appears as a main challenge and gap at increasing the status of women in society and strengthening their role at decision making processes in public spheres. Thus, ***the lack of local legislation in the field of prevention and protection from domestic violence and deep stereotypes towards the place of women and men seems to be the main obstacle to solving the phenomena of gender equality in Transdniestrian region.*** The necessity of adopting relevant and effective legislation applicable on domestic violence both at national and regional level is stated in most of the international and regional documents as well as in the European court on human rights case law.

Specific legislation has not been developed in the Transdniestrian region, especially to protect women from violence within the home or by a cohabiting partner or ex-partner. There is no definition of "domestic or family violence" at local transdniestrian legislation. Criminal and Administrative codes' provisions criminalize only severe or less severe physical injuries. Domestic violence cases are not

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<sup>5</sup> 5607 calls is a combined data provided from Informational line on domestic violence operated by Center Resonance and Trust line on domestic violence operated by NGO Interaction.



public prosecution cases - the woman has to complain and administer all evidence in her case. The public prosecutor will become active only in more severe bodily harm. The Criminal Code and Administrative Offences Code contains no aggravating circumstances for committing serious bodily harm or health injury against the spouse or a close relative, similarly in the case of intentional medium bodily harm or health injury against a spouse or a close relative. The Criminal Code criminalized the offence of «intentional severe or medium severe injury to a person's health» (art. 110 and art.111), while the offence of "intentional light physical injury or light injury to a person's health is covered by the Administrative Offences Code "intentional light physical injury". Reported domestic violence cases are investigated under these articles. Economical form of domestic violence does not covered or punished by Transdnestrian legislation at all.

Even when aggressors bear responsibility under the Administrative Offences Code of Transdnestria, the courts are usually used such penalty as a fine for offenders. But in practice most families run a joint household, a fine is paid from common budget or even sometimes a woman paid it if she is the one who bring money to the family. During the counseling activities of Center Resonance, 40% of women suffered from violence mentioned that they did not apply for help to police because the only sanction which is widely used is a fine. After the partner or spouse even will pay it he becomes even more aggressive towards victim again and again. According to the data from day-to-day practice from NGOs, only 20,4 % of women in Transdnestria applied for services in law enforcement bodies and lack of them considered such intervention efficient.

The provisions of Criminal Procedure Code do include only general principles of investigations crimes and judicial process which are typical for the main category of crimes. While investigation and judicial process on domestic violence cases requires elaboration of special mechanism for treating such cases and additional education of law enforcement officers (police, judges). Lack of special procedures how to deal with and investigate domestic violence cases entail impunity of aggressors and decline in confidence to law enforcement system from domestic violence victims.

Unfortunately, it is a widespread practice that women in Transdnestria who suffer different forms of violence are afraid to go to police, most of cases remain unreported. According to the results of the sociological surveys in the field of reflections the problem of domestic violence in the public opinion carried out by Center Resonance in 2009 and 2011 (with a total sample about 859 people) about 77% of the domestic violence victims never applied for help and justice to the any medical or law enforcement institutions (medicines, psychologists, police, NGOs, relatives and others).

Such a legal policy that does not effectively sanctions the violence suffered by women is in breach of the standards of due diligence established by the General Recommendation 19: "State may also be responsible for such acts of private persons if it fails to act with *due diligence* to prevent violations of rights or to investigate and punish acts of violence, and for providing compensation".

The legal and judicial framework in Transdnestria is incomplete with respect to implementation of requirements and creation of a legal mechanism to hold responsibility upon UN and European standards. *It is important to advocate for the adoption of a Local act on protection of victims of domestic violence In Transdnestria* with the support of local and international NGOs, international

human rights bodies. New law should focus on the issue of domestic violence and protect all possible persons who could suffer from it; introduce protection orders as immediate measures to protect the victim; create effective measures to protect and support victims of domestic violence; ensure creation of shelters and centers accessible to victims; ensure effective rehabilitation of victims; ensure effective correction measures for perpetrators, etc.

It is worth to mention that starting from the second half of 2009, Center Resonance initiated the discussions about the necessity of adoption special legislation on domestic violence in Transdnistria at different decision-making levels with the attraction both legislative and executive branch authorities. In 2010 – 2011, 4 lobby groups for promotion and adoption of local policy measures and legislation acts consisting of members of Parliament, NGOs, ministries, municipal authorities and deputies at local/rayon level have been created and worked on reviewing the provisions and recommendations from UN model law on protection from domestic violence, as well as best practices from the laws of CIS countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan) and elaborating the draft law on domestic violence. In June 2013, **the draft law on domestic violence** by the initiative of two deputies of de-facto Parliament (one of them is the speaker) was sent for discussion to all subjects of legislative initiative in Transdnistria. So officially it is entered into first phase of legislative initiative<sup>6</sup>. But it is not adopted and even discussed yet. So **the importance of international engagements and international organizations in promoting the issue of adoption special legal act on domestic violence**, in changing perceptions of violence against women and promoting a rights-based approach to dealing with the issue is quite demanded.

UN Senior expert on human rights in his report in 2013 recommended to combat effectively domestic violence violations and to develop a comprehensive programme which would **include a strict legislation**.

### **Existing of strong stereotypes towards the place of women and men in the family**

According to the opinion of the majority of population, the key primary role of women is baby and home care. The employability, self-realization for woman is viewed as secondary role after she will successfully end with the primary one. The most supported opinion regards the exclusively female responsibility to give birth and educate children, 80% of the respondents of sociological survey “Women’s Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in Transdnistria”<sup>7</sup> agreeing that “The role of a woman in society is to give birth and educate healthy children”. An especially high percent of affirmative answers is registered among elderly respondents (92%) and men (84%).

According to the results of the above mentioned survey, wife’s adultery is the only case in which a significant part of the respondents consider motivated applying physical violence on wife, men supporting this point of view more than women. The use of physical violence against the wife in case of

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<sup>6</sup> The text of the draft law as well as justification could be found on the official page of de-facto Parliament <http://www.vspmr.org/Law/?ID=4136>.

<sup>7</sup> The survey was conducted by Center Resonance in partnership with Center for prevention and combating of AIDS and infectious diseases in Tiraspol with the support of UNAIDS Moldova in 2011.

adultery is supported by 13% of respondents of which 17% are men. In the same time, 8% of men consider the violence against the wife justified only upon suspicion of adultery, such respondents amounting to 6% of the whole sample. Ivan, 23 years old, living in Slobozia town in Transdnistria stated *“first of all, most often it exists a special category of women that creates preconditions and sometimes wants the husband to hit her...”*

Traditional views of violence against women as a private concern still exist at judicial and police officers practice. Domestic violence is considered to be a private matter, common sayings from police officers are *“the wife and husband are made from one dough”* or *“beating means to love”*. There are also a number of widely held misconceptions so called “myths” about violence against women which treat the problem as isolated cases concerning a particular group. These misconceptions are: (a) violence against women is a phenomenon that takes place in poor and broken homes; (b) victims of violence are inherently vulnerable women needing special protection; (c) violent men are deviants who use alcohol and drugs or have personality disorders; (d) domestic violence involves all members of the household, including men.

As a result to such perceptions and attitudes towards violence against women, the police generally does not respond appropriately to calls from female victims of domestic violence. According to the internal data fixed by NGOs rendering services to the victims of domestic violence, many women reported that the police either did not respond to a call at all, or when they did respond, they did not provide women with protection from their abusers when they arrived. Maria, 40 years old from the village located close to Dubossary town *faced the refusal from the police officer to come to her house during her phone call to police asking for help*. Maria explained that different acts of physical and psychological violence were committed by her present husband towards her and her son and she was very afraid of her son’s life. Police (located in Dubossary town, 15 km far from her place of residence) motivated that it is not enough fuel to come to her house and advice to deal with family matter by themselves. In cases where the police investigated an assault and filed charges against an abuser under the Administrative Offences Code, a significant number were dismissed because the police *“failed to collect all evidences and witnesses record”*.

Women who attempt to access the legal system report that they often face significant obstacles and re-victimization. Unless violence results in serious physical injuries, police, prosecutors and judges are said to often trivialize the matter and discourage women from pursuing the case and an investigation.

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, mission to Moldova, Yakin Ertürk, mentions in her 2009 Report that unless it results in serious injury domestic violence is not perceived as a problem warranting legal intervention. As a result, it is experienced in silence and receives little recognition among officials, society and women themselves.

### **Lack of services for women who suffered from domestic violence**

For the total number of women population which is about 299 677 women, *there is no shelter for the victims of domestic violence* in Transdnistrian region. In the meantime, according to the international standards elaborated by WAVE Network one shelter for vulnerable women should be created for the

population not more than 50 000 people<sup>8</sup>, at the same time as per the United Nations standards one dedicated shelter should exist for every 10,000 citizens<sup>9</sup>.

After identification a victim of domestic violence by local NGO there is *no place to put her to a safe place* for the purpose to render immediate help. It was binding for the State party to have access to immediate means of redress and protection, including protection orders, and access to a sufficient number of safe shelters and legal aid, mentioning at Concluding observations to Moldova from CEDAW Committee in 2006.

There are eight shelters for victims of domestic violence or maternal centers in the rest of Moldova (in Chisinau city– which is 85 km far from the main city of Transdniestria and about 200 km far from the northeast town of Transdniestria, in Causeni district - which is 35 km far from the main city of Transdniestria and about 250 km from the northeast town of Transdniestria). According to the NGO practice most of the victims refuse to go to the shelter because of long distance, lack of contacts with friends, and even absence of phone connection between a woman and her relatives and friends from her residence (Moldova and Transdniestria obtain different telephone providers and it is rather expensive to call from one phone provider to another), challenges may arise with cross border passing for women with children who do not have relevant ID documents or permission from former husband which allow to go with a baby.

There are no specialized services for the victims of domestic violence, except those which are provided by local NGOs. Providers (forensic examiners, health and social providers) do not have adequate knowledge and skills how to respond to the victims of domestic violence.

There are some challenges both legal and financial in order to fulfill Concluding observations to Moldova, 2006 regarding access to shelters in Transdniestria: first of all, there is no legal provisions that foresee creation of specialized temporary shelters for victims of domestic violence. In the meantime, de-facto transdniestrian ministry of social protection and labour expressed its interest to create the shelter on the basis of local NGO working with victims of domestic violence and even ready to provide space for it which should be reconstructed and equipped. Secondly, the creation and further functioning of the shelter requires too much human, administrative and financial resources which is not incompatible and applicable without international support and assistance. Also Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Yakin Ertürk recommends both to the Government of Moldova and donor agencies to follow the recommendations made at the report in the field of the elimination of violence against women and girls, promotion gender equality and empowerment of women, institutional and public sector reforms.

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<sup>8</sup> Bridging Gaps – From Good Intentions to Good Cooperation: Manual for Effective Multi-Agency Cooperation [www.wave-network.org](http://www.wave-network.org)

<sup>9</sup> UN Division for the Advancement of Women, Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women (2010), Section 3.6.1.

There are some positive trends of cooperation between Transdnestrian – Moldavian authorities to solve social problems. For example, the Moldavian Ministry of Health, the Moldavian Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, the UN representatives and the Transdnestrian Ministry of Health and Social Protection cooperated in 2009-2010 to equip some prenatal maternity centers in Transdnestria and have formed “expert groups” from both sides to carry out this task. Such **model could be initiated in the case of adopting applicable legislation and internationally recognized standards in the field of domestic violence in Transdnestria.**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS for combating and prevention of domestic violence:**

1. Urgent adoption of the Law on Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence in Transdnestria;
2. Elaboration and development of services for victims of domestic violence, including establishment of Centers for temporary placement (shelters) on the territory of Transdnestria;
3. Periodic organisation of awareness campaigns to promote zero tolerance towards domestic violence in the society;
4. Development of special programmes in the higher and special educational institutions, which train future psychologists, social, medical workers, etc. in working with domestic violence cases;
5. Increased efforts of law-enforcement entities in investigating the domestic violence cases;
6. Introduction of gender disaggregated statistics standards.

## **IV. Women in labour market**

### **General statistical data**

According to the official statistics<sup>10</sup> for 2012, the employment agencies of Transdnestria officially registered 4 945 unemployed citizens (3.4% of the economically active population). Women account for 3035 or 61.4% out of the total number of registered persons. In 2012, there were registered 12 192 people as job seekers, including 6 704 women (55.0% out of the total number of registered persons). According to other official sources<sup>11</sup>, 8 751 persons are officially considered unemployed (about 7% of the economically active population).

As of 01.01.2013, the number of employees in all branches of economy (except for small businesses and according to official data) accounted for 104,0 thousand people, including 60,2 thousand women (or 57.9%). At the same time, the results of the sociological surveys carried out by the Center Resonance in 2011<sup>12</sup> show that the real level of women’s employment accounts for 42.6% in 2011, which is by 10% lower than the level of employment of men – 51.7%. This is determined strictly by the

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<sup>10</sup> Special report on social-economic situation in Transdnestria 2012

<sup>11</sup> Report of the Ministry of Social Protection and Labour

<sup>12</sup> Report on results of social survey “Vulnerability of women towards HIV infection in Transdnestria”, 2011 <http://aids.md/aids/index.php?cmd=item&id=1161>

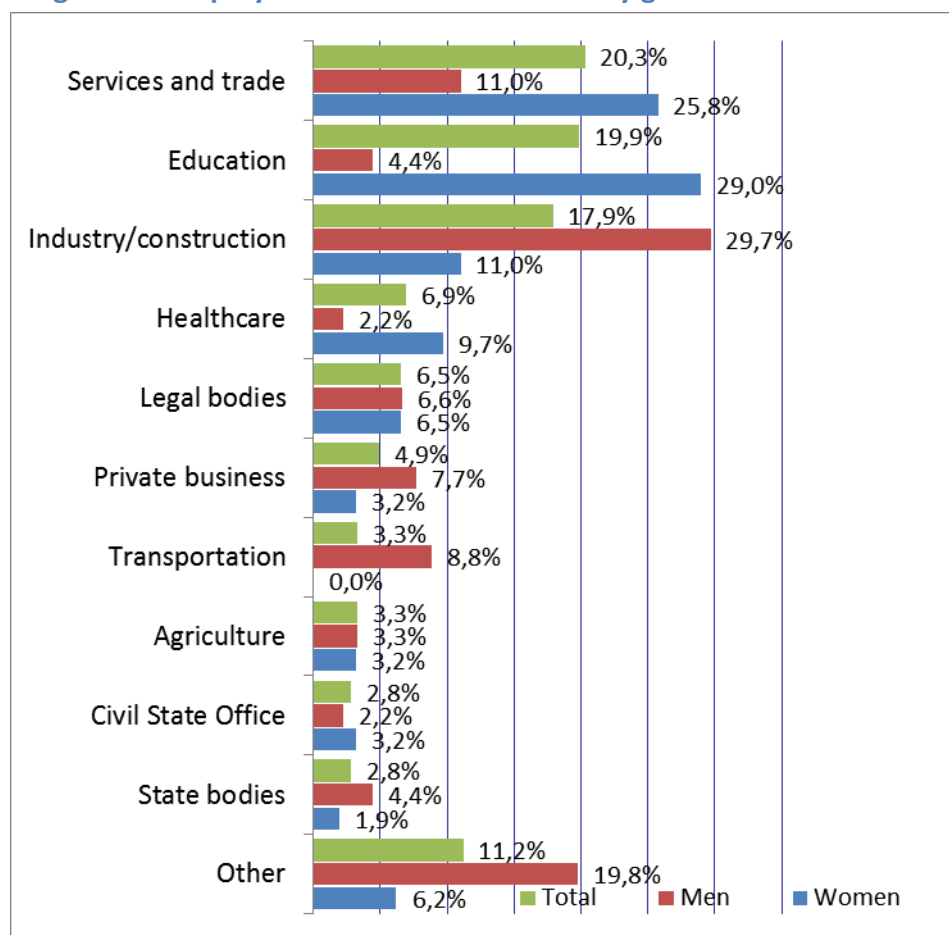
demographic factors, and namely by the larger share of ageing population among women, as well as by the number of housewives. Men are mostly employed seasonally or part-time (12.5% men compared to 4.7% women).

It is necessary to underline the low level of informational content of the official statistical data on employment and practically, total absence of gender disaggregated statistics, especially in the field of employment and labour remuneration.

### Employment and labour remuneration structure

According to the data of sociological survey of Center Resonance, the main employment sectors are services and commerce (20.3%), education (19.9%) and industry and constructions (17.9%). The first two sectors, as well as the healthcare sector, are sectors that employ mostly women, while the industry, constructions, as well as transport services employ mostly men (Diagram 1).

**Diagram 1. Employment sectors distributed by gender**



According to official statistics, in 2013 the average salary in healthcare sector was equal to 2 158 Transdnestrian Roubles (USD 194.5), 2 168 Transdnestrian Roubles (USD 195.3) in education, which is considerably less than in the construction sector – 4 036 Transdnestrian Roubles (USD 363.6) or industry – 4 824 Transdnestrian Roubles (USD 434.6), which mainly hire men. **Accordingly, by receiving a lower income than the men, women become vulnerable. The average income of most women in Transdnestria is also lower compared to the rest of the region (3 414 Transdnestrian**

**Roubles or USD 307.6). It is also important to note the feminisation of economic branches with low wage levels as a steady trend in the region in the last 10-15 years.**

## **Employment discrimination**

The Labour Code of Transdnistria stipulates equal chances of employment for both men and women, irrespective of their social status (Article 3, para 1 and 2 of the Code). But there are some restrictions that require additional justification and enforcement by special legal acts (Article 3 para 2 of the Code). There are no such laws in Transdnistria (only the Labour Code), except for an Order No.76 of 5 April 2002 of the Ministry of Economy of Transdnistria which restricts the possibilities of women's employment in more than 300 professions based on physiological limitation and impact on fertility. Moreover, this Order is not a law and its provisions also stipulate the possibility of women's employment in restricted types of jobs, if the employer provides all the necessary safety conditions.

In practice, however, the women encounter many discriminating factors when getting employed:

1. Very often the advertisements of vacancies consist of discriminating requirements. Most employers determine immediately discriminatory employment criteria. An example of such advertisement is: "We are hiring a Human Resource Deputy Director; Office Manager; Personal Assistant – working with people and documents. Requirements: male between 25 and 50 years old, active, communicative, PC literate; Attractive and timely salary"<sup>13</sup>. Another example of advertisement, "We are looking for good looking young women to work in a matrimonial agency with no knowledge of English. Age from 18 to 30 years!..."<sup>14</sup>
2. During the interview or even in the applications, the potential employers ask questions about the presence and number of children, disabled children, and type of disability. Very often they ask the following discriminating questions:
  - Are you pregnant?
  - Do you plan to get pregnant in the next half a year – three years?
  - Are you married?
  - Do you have a baby?
  - How many young children do you have and what is their age?

The mismatch with the requirements mentioned in the advertisement or "incommode" answers to the questions lead often to decline women's employment applications. These factors are proved by women who addressed the Center Resonance, NGO Apriori, NGO Tiraspol Association of Families with Disabled Children and other social and law-enforcement NGOs in Transdnistria.

**Example 1.** *Citizen A declared during an employment interview with a private school that she was not planning to have children in the next three years. After three months it became clear that she was expecting a baby. This immediately became a reason to dismiss her on the grounds that a pregnant*

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<sup>13</sup> The advertisement can be viewed at [doska.es-pmr.com/objavleniya/vse\\_pridnestrovje/trudoustroistvo\\_obuchenie/predlagaju\\_rabotu/record/100206](http://doska.es-pmr.com/objavleniya/vse_pridnestrovje/trudoustroistvo_obuchenie/predlagaju_rabotu/record/100206)

<sup>14</sup> The advertisement can be viewed at <http://makler.md/ru/tiraspol/job-and-education/job/job-offers/an/91232>

woman does not look nice and confuse the children. She did not address to court to be reinstated in her rights and lost her social security.

The Criminal Code of Transdniestria has a special article (141) which imposes big fines on employers for “unjustified refusal to hire or unjustified dismissal of a woman due to her pregnancy, as well as unjustified refusal to hire or unjustified dismissal of a woman with children below 3 years of age”. Article 64 para 3 of the Labour Code of the region states that it is illegal to deny employment to women because of pregnancy or presence of children. But when examining the legal practice, the authors of the report did not encounter any legal case which was ruled on the basis of these normative provisions. Nevertheless, the Prosecutor’s Office of the region has discovered 488 infringements in the labour sector in the first six months of 2013, which accounts for 24.9% of the total infringements; almost all being related to salary non-payment<sup>15</sup>. ***By putting together all the facts, we can conclude that the controlling entities do not pay attention to discrimination in labour relations, especially discrimination of women.***

### **Discrimination in labour relationships**

The activity of the Center Resonance and other social non-profit organisations of the region, including those that took part in the development of this report (analysis of applications of women who sought support and consultation) have registered many cases of women discrimination during employment. Frequently, this is manifested in the following:

- Often, after being hired, a woman is subject to a probation period from two to six months. This gives the employer the possibility (in case of pregnancy, for instance) to conclude a fix-term employment agreement instead of indefinite employment agreement or not to conclude any at all, which deprives the vulnerable women of social security. Moreover, the salary during the probation period is usually 50% lower.
- Sexual harassment at the working place. The legislation of Transdniestria stipulates criminal liability for such actions (Article 130 of the CC), but the authors of the report did not find any cases of applying this article in the law-enforcement practice.

**Example 2.** *The citizen G., during her employment interview with the lawyer of a state-unitary enterprise, when asked about marriage and family planning declared that she was not going to get married or plan children in the following 2 years, and after a month it became clear that she was pregnant. Since the employment agreement was concluded with a probation period, it was changed into fix-term employment agreement and when she left for the maternity leave, she was dismissed because of the agreement termination.*

According to Article 257 para 2 of the Labour Code of Transdniestria, if the fix-term employment agreements elapses during the pregnancy period, the employer, based on her written request, shall extend the agreement until the end of the pregnancy period. But the citizen G. did not make use of this right and lost the job and corresponding social security.

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<sup>15</sup> Source: <http://prokuror-pmr.org/index.php/itogi-raboty-prokuratury-pmr-za-2013-god/392-informatsiya-o-rezultatakh-deyatelnosti-prokuratury-pridnestrovskoj-moldavskoj-respubliki-za-i-kvartal-2013-goda>



***The authors of the report have concluded that in the above mentioned cases, the state authorities do not have efficient mechanisms (existing possibilities of the legislation are not used) to prevent and respond to the types of women discrimination mentioned, to reinstate the women in their rights, to reinstate the gender discrimination victims in their rights and to prosecute the perpetrators.***

### **Dismissal-related discrimination**

The legislation stipulates the utmost right of the women with children under 3 years to keep the job while she is on child care leave (Labour Code – Article 257), but while examining the applications addressed to the Legal Informational Center Apriori and other social-related NGOs in the region, it was discovered that namely this category of women is being dismissed in practice.

The low level of legal culture of the region's population allows the employers to manipulate the employees, including during dismissals. In particular, according to the approved Government Decision of Transdnistria, the directives "on the procedure of keeping the employment history book" (document that registers the employment history of the person) stipulate mandatory mentioning of grounds for dismissal and re-employment, which forces women to avoid addressing the court for reinstatement into their right, because there is a prejudice in the society that if a woman was reinstated in her job based on court ruling, she will find a job extremely difficult or it will be impossible for her to find a job at all, because no employer wants to hire a woman who has the experience to fight for her rights in court.

**Example 3.** *The citizen C. was hired as Director of the Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children when she was taking care of her 9-month-old child. After two months, the administration accused her that she did not fulfil her duties of Director and by threatening her to mention the grounds for dismissal as unsuitable for the position held due to lack of qualification in the employment record book, it demanded she wrote a resignation notice. Because she was afraid she would not find a job in the future, she wrote the resignation notice and she resigned. The citizen C. did not address to court to be reinstated into her rights within the one month period.*

In 2012, according to official data<sup>16</sup> 26 764 people resigned from companies and organisations of Transdnistria, which accounts for 25.5% of employed staff as of the beginning of the year. The main reason for resignation is personal choice, which accounts to 22 737 (85.0%) of resignations/dismissals. This is an indirect proof of the forced dismissal described above.

### **Gender stereotypes related to women employment**

The situation in the employment area has a serious impact both on traditional stereotypes regarding male and female specialities and the roles of men and women in the society and family. These stereotypes were discovered by means of the social survey "Vulnerability of women to HIV infection in

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<sup>16</sup> Revised report on social and economic situation in Transdnistria 2012.

Transdnestria” carried out by the Center Resonance in 2011<sup>17</sup>. According to survey results, 42 per cent of respondents consider that the woman should stay at home and bring up children, while the man has to earn money, mostly men (48%), young persons of 15-19 years (48%), elders of 50-64 years (52%) and inhabitants of villages (49%).

There is no consolidated point of view regarding the equal opportunities for employment. In most cases, the declaration that men can find work more easily than women is motivated by the fact that the men can work physically, which extends the labour market. Those who think that women find job easier than the men justify their point of view by the fact that the woman (versus man) can afford to work for less money because the “main breadwinner in the family is anyway the man”.

The results of focus groups showed that one respondent pointed out at unequal status of young women at employment, because the employers prefer not to hire women before giving birth to children:

- *“The head of the legal department of the bank: “Hello, do you have any smart boys as legal experts?”. I answered, “Maybe some girls?”, to which he replies, “No, I do not want girls because I had one and she is on maternity leave right now”. As a rule, young women without children are not welcome, and even if women are welcome, these should be older, and as a rule with children, and with broad experience. For a young specialist, in particular a girl it is more difficult to get employed in a town, as for villages, it would be something exceptional”. (Man, 27 years, Tiraspol).*

There are men who justify the superiority of men and even give explanation by underlining the differences between women and men as regards their capacity:

- *“As in any organisation, in any society, there should be a person who should make the final decision that should be discussed in the family as well, of course; but there should be a person who would decide that ‘it will be like this, and that’s it’ and this is the role of the man in the family” (Man, 19 years, Camenca)*
- *“I do not know and I am not going to affirm it but I think that intellectually the man is more developed. I am not going to be specific about it, but in some managerial, maybe not intellectually, but from the communication point of view, the man finds it easier to organise himself and find some work, it is easier to adjust and find its place in the collective” (Man, 29 years, Tiraspol)*

The stereotypes laid down at the earliest stages of social personal development such as programmes in kindergartens, where boys and girls have to attend different events in strictly specified costumes (boys as bunnies, girls as snowflakes), the boys are trained as future drivers, handymen, and girls as exquisite cooks, housewives and future mothers have a huge influence on women’s discrimination in the employment sector.

The school curriculum is also developing these stereotypes, for instance, the handicraft lessons differ for boys and girls: the girls attend housekeeping, sewing and cooking courses, while the boys - carpentering, fitting and electricity courses.

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<sup>17</sup> Source: <http://aids.md/aids/index.php?cmd=item&id=1161>

*Generallyh, talking about women's discrimination in the employment sector, than the most vulnerable women are the women of reproductive age, single mothers, mothers with many children and retired women, as well as disabled women or caretakers of a disabled child. The employer prefers a middle age woman with no children.*

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS to improve the status of women on the labour market:**

1. Develop and implement locally an Action Plan for stopping and preventing discrimination, especially of young women of reproductive age and single mothers, especially when hired
2. Creation of juridical mechanisms and conditions, necessary for the diminution of the phenomenon of sexual harassment at work place and in educational environment
3. Development of efficient monitoring mechanisms and analyses of law-enforcement practice in the area of labour guarantees for young mothers and women of reproductive age
4. Organisation of a large awareness campaign to protect women's rights on the labour market.

### **V. Vulnerable groups of women: mothers – single parents**

According to local legislation (Law on State Child Benefits to Citizens with Children, Article 15 para 4), a single parent is a person who in the birth certificate of the child has nothing mentioned with regard to the name of the father or it is made on mother's indication, as well as divorced persons who did not remarry, widows and widowers.

The family institute goes through a transformation process in Transdnistria. The migration flows lead to increased number of family disintegration; the increasing number of life partnerships becomes a reason for increased number of incomplete families. **As a rule (more than 90% of cases), the economic, pedagogical and psychological burden in such families is put on the woman's shoulders. This is confirmed by the case law, when after divorce, in most cases the children and their upbringing and other duties carried out by both parents are vested usually with the women.**

There is no complete official statistics regarding the number of single mothers in Transdnistria, although, some entities try to keep record of these families. For instance, according to the data of the Social Protection Department of Tiraspol, there were 845 single mothers in Tiraspol<sup>18</sup> in 2010. The Committee on the Protection of the Minorst Rights has under preventive supervision 325 minors from 169 vulnerable families, and 75% - incomplete families, i.e. 127 families<sup>19</sup>. In the general school and

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<sup>18</sup> The statistics are presented by Social Protection Department of Tiraspol <http://vestnik.mfa-pmr.org/engine/print.php?newsid=99>

<sup>19</sup> The source of information: <http://point.md/ru/novosti/politika/v-tiraspole-otmechayut-rost-kolichestva-del-svyazannih-s-lisheniem-roditeljskih-prav>

local kindergarten in Bichok village, Grigoriopol Raion, there are 150 children, of which 62 children are from incomplete families, which accounts for 41% of the total number of pupils.

**There are no special psychological, pedagogical or legal programmes for this category of women at the national level; the services provided to single mothers (for instance, special baby rooms or social workers who would take care of the child so the mother can settle house or personal issues, such as go for groceries, to a doctor, hair stylist, etc.).** There are no specialised NGOs that provide services in the support to and protection of single mothers. The Non-Government Organisation Legal Informational Center Apriori has launched a pilot project to support incomplete families and protection of rights of single mothers in 2012. According to Center's data, in the first half of the year of activity, the Center registered more than 70 addresses of women to legal specialists in such fields as protection of economical rights of the mother and child, property and housing rights, labour rights. 74% of women who addressed a lawyer have low economic status, and live on the edge of poverty. The income in such incomplete families (mother and child) is usually less than USD 100 per month; the mother and child live on child support or pension.

**Example 1:** *the Legal Informational Center Apriori registered an address from the administration of one of the Tiraspol kindergartens with a request to influence the mother, who picks up her child from the kindergarten very late. The request of the administration of the kindergarten insisted on finding administrative levers to influence the mother or to transfer the child into another educational institution. When the circumstances were examined, it was discovered that the mother was bringing up the child alone, and her working day ended at the same time as the working schedule of the kindergarten, and she could not physically pick up the child on time. Because of the lack of services and policies for the protection of incomplete families, the woman had to make a choice: either to find another job with a flexible programme or transfer the child into another kindergarten.*

The low level of economic support of single women bringing up children induces a number of issues:

- inadequate living conditions,
- impossibility to pay the rent and utilities,
- malnutrition,
- limited access to medical services and education,
- insufficient efforts to take care of the child.

In these cases, child mistreatment cases increase. The consequences of neglecting child's needs or inadequate treatments can be impaired physical, social, intellectual and educational development of the child.

The single mothers receive social allowances, if they are officially declared as single mothers. Thus, in order to qualify for state social protection, the woman has to prove her status. It has to be mentioned that the procedure is not complicated, but the official status of a single parent (or single mother) is also a kind of discrimination and stigmatization for the mother and child, because of the widely spread stereotypes in the society. **The woman and the child, who is born in a family without a father, are subject to stigmatization, condemnation, and become an object for mockery and insults.** The society still calls the single mothers as those that "slept around", "child of sin", "bastard", "fatherless", etc. This influence of stereotypes is very stringent in rural areas, where to have a child without being

married is considered to be disgraceful. According to the results of the sociological surveys of the Center Resonance, the stereotype that a single pregnant woman is a disgrace for her parents and relatives has been declared by 22% of the population of Transdniestria, mostly by men (27%), young people of 20-24 years (27%), elders of 50-64 years (26%) **but especially by the rural population (34%)<sup>20</sup>**.

**Example 2.** *A 30-year-old woman, unmarried, who lives in Solobozia Raion of Transdniestria left her home when she found out that she was pregnant. She was forced to leave Transdniestria; she worked illegally practically until she gave birth to support herself and the child. She was taken to the maternity from work. After the delivery, when the baby was only 1 month old, she was taking him to work to a basement where she worked as a seamstress. She returned to her village after 3 years, when she got married. Because she was afraid to be rejected by the family and villagers (she had a baby without a father), she put her health and her baby's health at risk.*

**The underage single mothers represent one of the most discriminated category of women. Their rights are least protected.** The legislation on social insurance provides for pregnancy and child birth allowance for the uninsured (i.e. unemployed) women, full-day students with day release in primary technical, secondary and higher vocational educational institutions, post-graduate vocational institutions. The size of monthly amounts to **232.05 Transdniestrian Roubles** or USD 21. The cost of living, according to the data of the Ministry of Economic Development (<http://www.mepmr.org/>), of child of 0-6 years is 1 119 Roubles – USD 101.7 per month<sup>21</sup>. **However, this category of women does not include teenage girls, who become mothers as pupils of general schools, lyceums and gymnasiums. This category of single mothers does not have the right to claim that even if they are officially proved as such.**

**An important moment is the low level of legal culture and awareness of single mothers. There is a lack of special web pages or informational boards, programmes, organisations where the mother can receive all necessary information to be able to protect herself and her child. There are no effective mechanisms to provide support for this category of women from the state and civil society.**

**Example 3.** From the practice of Center Resonance:

*A 31-year-old woman, not married, unemployed, without own housing has a 1.5-year-old child. She lost the passports of Transdniestria and Moldova. Since she has no passport, she has not received the child care allowance for about 7 months (as of the date of addressing to the Center). The social protection entities told her that without a passport (as a proof of citizenship of Transdniestria), she has no right to receive the child care allowance. She cannot get a new passport because she has no residency (the residency permit is still operational in Transdniestria). The woman is in a vicious circle.*

**The mother – single parent, who receives the given status as a result of a divorce very often depends economically on her ex-husband and is subject to degrading procedure of claiming alimony from the child's father through court.** According to the case law, after the woman addresses to the

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<sup>20</sup> Report on results of sociological survey "Vulnerability of Women with HIV infection in Transdniestria" 2011, <http://aids.md/aids/index.php?cmd=item&id=1161>

<sup>21</sup> Source: <http://www.mepmr.org/>

court to claim alimony, the court is waiting for father's presents in the court and agreement with requirements about alimony and their amount. Sometimes it lasts long enough (6-12 months) and the whole time the woman has no resources to exist (it is stringent especially if the child is very small, and she cannot work).

Because of the special status of Transdniestria, the collection of child alimont payments is often impossible, if the father leaves the territory of Transdniestria. Under the conditions of the active labour migration, this problem is very acute. The access of the citizens of Transdniestria to the Moldovan human rights protection system is cumbersome. This is especially felt by women who have to legalize their status and provide documents to the Documentation Department of the Republic of Moldova. This also refers to the document flow, such as divorce, deprivation of parental rights, and collection of child support payments. For instance, if the marriage was registered in Moldova, but the family lived and got divorced on the territory of Transdniestria (receiving a proper Transdniestrian document), then the divorce certificate is not valid anywhere but on the territory of Transdniestria. Accordingly, the woman is not economically protected, if the father of the child leaves Transdniestria and refuses to pay child support.

**Example 4.** *A young unemployed woman addressed to NGO Center for Support and Development of Civil Initiatives Resonance. At that moment, her son was 1.6 years. One year after the child's birth, the woman's spouse left the country to find work in Moscow. After his departure, he sent money during 5 months, but then found another woman and stopped supported his family. The woman did not know the exact residency of her husband. As a result she addressed to court to dissolve the marriage and collect the child support. Based on the fact that the registered address of the husband was unknown and it was impossible to summon him, so he could appear in court and confirm the claims of the woman-plaintiff, the judge postponed the case several times and after a while, the case was pending until the location of the husband is known. During all this time, the woman had to borrow money from friends or work part-time (renovations in apartments in the presence of the child).*

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS to improve the situation of mothers – single parents:**

1. Creation of specialized centers and development of services for single mothers in difficult situation;
2. Development and implementation of programmes to train social workers to work with incomplete families (especially with under-age mothers – single parents);
3. Development and implementation of programmes directed to enhance the culture of family relations, gender-sensitive family values. These should be implemented in all public social institutes (starting with the kindergartens);
4. Reorganisation of the child support system for single parents - mothers to simplify the procedure of receiving allowances; include the under-age single mothers who are still pupils in general schools, lyceums and gymnasiums; increase the amount of child support to the amount of the minimum of sub-existence,
5. Development and implementation of programmes to increase the social, economic and social culture about single mothers,
6. Development and implementation of awareness campaigns to eliminate the negative stereotypes in the society with regard to mothers – single parents.

## VI. Vulnerable groups of women: women of reproductive age

**A low level of access to medical services of women of reproductive age is registered in Transdnistria, especially in the rural area.** The lack of money does not permit some people to receive medical services, even if these services are free, including the diagnosis. The women residing in the rural area often refuse these medical services. This happens because of additional transport costs, difficulty to get around, when they have to leave the household and spend more than 5 hours (including the trip itself) to be checked-up by a doctor. This gets complicated by the fact that the transport infrastructure is underdeveloped in some raions, especially in winter season.

Generally, according to the results of the sociological survey “Vulnerability of women towards HIV infection” carried out by the Center Resonance in 2011, only 60% of women between 15-49 years sought gynaecological check-up during the last 12 months. The age group of 15-19 years accounts only for 27% of women who received gynaecological check-up, which points out the lack of reproductive health culture, especially among young women – teenagers.

**Example 1:** *There is no Gynaecologist in the Bichok village, Grigoriopol Raion. According to the schedule, he commutes from Grigoriopol raion once a month, but in reality, he comes 1 times per 3 month, and, of course, this is also not enough. In 2012, there were 638 women residing in the village, including 313 women of reproductive age. The women have to travel for a check-up to Tiraspol (15 km away) or Bender (9 km away), where the consultation is not free, because the woman does not reside in the jurisdiction. In Grigoriopol (40 km away from the village), they receive free consultation but there is no direct route that connects the village and the town. Moreover, to travel to the Raion is costly and uncomfortable. It was possible to undergo medical tests and receive consultations in the neighbouring village Malaesti (which has a hospital), but recently, the women from Bichok are no longer received there, which forces them to travel to Tiraspol or Bender.*

**Statistically, every year half of the future mothers get rid of unwanted pregnancies in Transdnistria. 45% of pregnancies end up in abortion (about 4500 cases every year), with 10% among mothers of 15 and 19 years old.** <sup>22</sup>

**The abortion is a widelyspread method for birth control. The number of abortions equals to the number of born children. Thus, according to official statistics, 5 189 children were born in 2010, 4 999 babies in 2011, 5 173 children in 2012.**

During a radio interview in Transdnistria, the Head of Tiraspol Center for Reproductive Health, O. Ceban, gave the following data: early pregnancies have increased lately. **450 abortions of teenagers younger than 18 years were registered in 2011.** The interruption of the pregnancy longer than 12 weeks was registered among teenagers in 2012. The abortions in such early age lead frequently to infertility. 115 women of reproductive age were registered as infertile in 2012.

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<sup>22</sup> The statistics are offered by the Tiraspol Center for Reproductive Health:  
[http://www.radiopmr.org/news/8920/3/Sovety-vracha-podrostkovaya-beremennost/?sphrase\\_id=6688](http://www.radiopmr.org/news/8920/3/Sovety-vracha-podrostkovaya-beremennost/?sphrase_id=6688)

Similarly, early beginning of sexual relations has been registered lately. Currently, the number of sexual relations started by girls of 12, 13, and 14 years old has increased. The results of surveys of Center Resonance show the decrease of the age of starting sexual relations. The age of the first sexual intercourse among 45-49-year-old is 18.4 years, whilst among young people of 20-24 is 17.1 years and the minimal age registered among 15-19-year-old – 15.6 years.

When talking about different methods of contraception and condoms, first of all, it should be noted that according to sociological surveys, 63.4% of respondents declared that the reason for not using condom is the refusal of the partner. This was very often mentioned by women (68.2%, compared to 58.5% of men), which proves the vulnerability of the women because of the partner.

Also, women more often than men (41.3%) mention that the condom is not used because they are ashamed to buy it, which is a predetermined limitation of woman's freedom in sexual relations.

The questions regarding the access to birth control methods, policy for protection and prophylaxis of reproductive health of women of the respective age and girls-teenagers, increased awareness campaigns are very stringent.

**The mothers and their babies do not receive perinatal care in line with internationally acceptable standards.** This happens not only because of lack of modern equipment, especially in the rural area, but also because of the lack of possibilities of medical personnel who uses obsolete equipment, who is weakly qualified and has no protocols.

**Example 2:** *When the report was drafted, the following numbers of children were residing in Bichok Village, Grigoriopol Raion: younger than 1 year - 9 people, from 1 to 2 years - 4 people, from 2 to 3 years – 21 people. The Paediatrician travels from Malaeshti village once a month. The parents are forced to take their children to Bender and Tiraspol.*

*Case: The umbilical cord was cut at birth, but it got infected inside the stomach. Due to untimely paediatric check-up, nobody registered the infection (the nurse could not determine the diagnosis; she checks the mucous, height, weight, etc.). The infection progressed and the baby died.*

**The most widely spread malignant tumours in Transdnistria is breast cancer.** More than 2000 women are registered with this illness, and most of them are of reproductive age. In Transdnistria there is one device/piece of equipment to check and early detect the pathology, but the access of rural population to this equipment is impeded.

**RECOMMENDATIONS regarding the improvement of the situation of women of reproductive age:**

1. Providing possibilities for early medical check-up of women, especially of reproductive age.
2. Development and implementation of a large awareness campaign for using different birth control methods, sexual relations planning, and prophylaxis of reproductive health.
3. Development and implementation of special reproductive health and general sexual education programmes in the curricula of educational institutions.