

CEDAW report review

There are several concerns regarding roma women that are currently not addressed but should be in order to assure better security and access for them.

Multiple discrimination – as intersectional discrimination, occurs when discrimination is based on more than one ground. Critics towards multiple discrimination show that there are problems within the legal framework that makes almost impossible to address and prove a discrimination case based on more than one ground. The lack of cases based on multiple ground, lack of awareness on multiple discrimination in statistics, the impossibility of developing the concept in legal cases and lack of acknowledgment of the issue within the work of courts and legal institutions are some of them. *Since discrimination on more than one ground has a stronger effect of exclusion than discrimination based on one ground it is highly important that the national legislation should develop instruments, juridical practice and acknowledgments of multiple/intersectional discrimination as an aggravated form which can also bring higher sanctions which currently are not strong enough to combat the phenomenon.*

Sexual violence and violence against roma women. There is a structural violence manifested at different levels from institutions such as police officers, social protection, or shelters to aggressors and perpetrators of violence. A qualitative study released in 2015¹ showed the lack of trust among the authorities to call when women are abused due to police reluctance and often refusal to register complaints. The report showed that the ethnic stigma is so strongly affected by authority's attitude that they internalize violence as a cultural attitude with no solutions. The lack of services and support system such as shelters to help women get out of abusive situations, lack of access to juridical system which is very expensive and also high bureaucracy in obtain a restriction order leaves them no opportunity or security. The amplitude of violence and sexual violence cases against roma young girls are unreported and invisible. But even when reporting cases of kidnaping and rape, such cases are motivated by police officers as "roma culture" associated with early marriages that are presumed to gain means from aggressor or his family. Practices such as marriages where the young roma do not have the proper age for consent should be the subject of an investigation opened by relevant authorities (police, child protection) but currently they are not intervening using culture as an excuse. But violence is not roma culture and should not be use as an excuse by authorities, which shows their racial motivation. *We consider that the following phenomenon should be taken into consideration as being forms of violence against roma women: violence in all its forms (physical, economical etc), early and forced marriages, marital rape, hate speech (especially public speech that address roma women's 'too productive bodies' and force sterilizations speech which was present in Romanian discourse at the political level*

Roma Women's issues within the policies for roma and gender issues: Women's rights are neglected among the ethnic group as well as among the majority of population defining them, as one of the most vulnerable groups is Romania.

¹ Study realsead by ngo's E-Romnja Association, Filia Centre, CSJDO and Romano Butiq called , 'Phenja: Surority among women against gender based violence'' 2015

Discrimination that confronts Roma women in the family (hindering access to education or employment) extends in society, conflicts that occur near home, in interaction with public institutions, politicians and businesses employing-in part because poor training or lack thereof, irrelevant work experience, but mainly because of the lack of policies to support them. For example, a study released in 2011 revealed that more than 40% of roma women² at their workplace are exploited and discriminated due to their ethnicity and gender but no accusations were made because of the lack of support systems. The patriarchal system that dominates Romanian society and the gender roles designated had a great influence upon their position within policies for roma but also the gender issues being seen as an ethnic issue. This is why women's issues on the local agenda remains very limited, in all cities and towns where the percentage of Roma population is significant and is invisible in strategies that address gender equality. Moreover, within roma communities more than 60% of women live without proper access to care services, infrastructure and housing. Therefore we recommend policies at local level to increase participation of roma women

Therefore, we recommend for a intersectional approach in policies at national and local level when addressing roma and gender issues considering that roma women do not only belong to an ethnic group but are also women and may also come with other identities as sexual orientation etc.

Human rights in health: Most of time roma women are perceived as beneficiary of social assistance and free medical treatment. The negative perceptions translate in serious health issues starting with access. For example roma women's maternal death is 16 time higher the national rates³. For those living in marginalized communities the access to a gynecologist is practically impossible since most of them have cabinets at at least 50 km from their places. A study released by UNICEF in 2014 showed that disadvantage women from rural areas reach a gynecologist when being pregnant in the third semester, which means an evolved pregnancy without medical care. Because of the lack of specialists and family planning, roma women were subjects of threats coming from nationalist/extremist organizations. One of such kind launched a campaign in 2013 to sterilize roma women who have more children, being willing to pay them 50 euros for that. Reproductive rights are of threat not only form roma women but generally for women. Moreover they are stigmatize because of their ethnic, social and economic status, all this increasing their vulnerability in relation with medical personal. Segregated sections within hospitals where roma women are placed apart from non roma are still happening in Romania. Even though such cases were taken to European Court for Human Rights, *Ministry of Health had never issued a report monitoring human rights in accessing health care. We strongly recommend this to be taken into consideration since it could solve a lot of licks within the system but also the management of hospitals. Addressing multiple discrimination in access to health services can be a first step in medical care more accessible for roma women.*

² See Mocanu Gheorghe "Roma women on the labor market: interests, representation and union participation", AMM Design 2011

³ According to the statements within the national strategy for roma 2015