

Submission from the Center for Partnership and Equality (CPE, Romania)

I. Statistical data related to violence against women

In 2003, **Center for Partnership and Equality (CPE)** run a survey at the national level entitled “The National Research on Domestic Violence and Violence in the Workplace”.

The representative survey for the whole population estimates domestic violence and not exclusively violence against women, on the basis of 18 forms of violence (included in all the five categories of violence considered: psychological violence, physical violence, social violence, economic violence, sexual violence) that occurred within the family (1. aggressors from outside the family are not taken into account and 2. the aggressors can be other than partner).

According with the findings of the report:

- 14,3% of the whole population of Romania, 17,8% of women respectively, state that they have been victims of one or another type of domestic violence at a certain point in their lives.
- Domestic violence is associated with a set of beliefs and values generating a tolerant environment in which this type of violence can grow. The tolerant attitude towards domestic violence is accompanied by the ignorance of individual rights provided for by the law. Only 55% of the persons subjected to domestic violence abuse, women and men alike, as the rest of the population, know about the existence of a law protecting victims of domestic violence and sanctioning the aggressor.

Psychological violence:

- 12,8% of the adult population in Romania reports psychological domestic violence.
- Psychological violence is almost twice more frequent in the case of women (16%) than of men (9%), regardless of age or ethnic origin.
- The men reporting psychological violence are psychologically aggressed to or subject to aggression in their families mainly during their childhood and young adulthood, before getting married and leaving their original family. Women are psychologically subject to aggression to a considerably lower extent in their original families. In exchange, psychological violence against women is a phenomenon associated with the period of marriage.

Physical violence:

- 6,8% of the adult population in Romania reports physical domestic violence.
- Physical violence is almost four times more frequent against women (10,5%) than against men (2,5%), regardless of age or of ethnic origin.
- Women account for 83% of all cases of physical domestic violence.

Social violence:

- 7,1% of the adult population in Romania reported social domestic violence.
- Social violence is almost two times more frequent against women (9,3%) than against men (4,6%), regardless of age, education level, ethnic origin or religion.

Economic violence:

- 4,2% of the adult population in Romania reports economic domestic violence.

- Economic violence is over twice more frequent for women (5,7) than for men (2,5%), regardless of age, ethnic origin, religion, level of education or social or professional category.

Sexual violence:

- 1,4% of the adult population in Romania reported sexual domestic violence.
- Sexual violence is only reported by women (2,6%), so it is a form of violence exclusively against women.
- 12% of the divorced women reported marital rape, versus 2,3% of the married women or 1,8% of the widows.

During 2002 – 2003 (12 months):

- about 800.000 thousand women in Romania have frequently been subject to domestic violence in various forms.
- over 370.000 children (aged 0 – 14) in Romania frequently witnessed insults and swearing between their parents or between other adults within the household.
- Over 340.000 children in Romania witnessed scenes of physical violence between their parents.

Sexual harassment:

In 2003, 4.7% of Romanian population knows someone that, within the last two years has been victim of sexual harassment. In 90% of the cases, the victims have been women and in 55% of the cases the perpetrator was a “boss” or a “director” and in 24% of the cases it was the „business owner”.

II. Good practices examples from the actual experience of NGOs:

The Coalition of NGOs Working in the Area of Violence Against Women

The Coalition of NGOs Working in the Area of Violence Against Women was founded on the 1st of February 2003, during the Conference for the Prevention and Elimination of Domestic Violence organized by the **Center Partnership for Equality (CPE)** and the **Initiative for Family Health in Romania**, within a USAID-funded program.

The National Coalition is an informal structure, without corporation status, and has gathered together 32 organizations with an average experience of 5 years in the field, while some of them have a 10-year long history.

The objectives established by the Coalition:

- Prevent, combat and monitor the issue of violence against women
- Promote good practice and policies
- Promote the common interests of the organizations
- Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Coalition

The set priorities are: legislation and implementation mechanisms; standards for information and education; lobby for governmental funding, expertise database; drafting the domestic violence national strategy; establishing the operational principles of the Coalition; representation at decision-making level (identifying the criteria for representation; strengthening the institutional capacity of the Coalition).

Why is it a good practice?

The National Coalition:

- brings together almost all NGOs working in the field of violence against women in Romania.
- has a very good organisational structure: organised in themes groups, each organisation can work in their main areas of interest: legislation, lobby and advocacy, strategy and standards, institutional development.
- is a democratic structure: each organisation is involved in managing the Coalition. The main decision maker is the General Assembly, which selects five persons to be responsible with different tasks, a spokesperson, and an organisation which is responsible with the secretariat.
- brings together experts from NGOs all over the country, and they debate the current problems related to domestic violence. For example, the Coalition experts elaborated a set of standards for services for women victims of domestic violence.
- represents an active force in lobbying and making advocacy: they work together in local and national campaigns, they put pressure on local authorities, Government to enforce the legislation on domestic violence and pressure the Parliament to improve the legislation.
- monitors the work of the main institutions responsible with the implementation of the legislation on violence against women.
- establishes partnerships with different actor in the field of violence against women: National Agency for Family Protection, police, local authorities etc.

For more detailed information please find attached the Annual report of the Coalition (2004).

III. Key recommendations the study should be proposing:

- more involvement and investment by the Government:
 - In education, in order to change peoples mentalities and reduce the tolerance towards domestic violence. The facts reveal that the first step to reducing violence against women is to socially define violent behavior, whatever its form of expression, as a problem requiring correction.
 - In awareness rising campaigns among population on the laws and regulations regarding domestic violence and sexual harassment.
 - In programs designed to change the gender stereotypes, especially on the way women are portrayed in mass media.
- improving the legislation on domestic violence, through the introduction of the *restriction/eviction order*.
- enforcing the legislation on domestic violence by:
 - ensuring funding for victim support services
 - opening shelters for victims
 - involving the local authorities more actively in preventing and combating domestic violence.