



VioGen - RoJust

The project “VioGen - RoJust” is a strategic action aimed at effectively implementing the Council of Europe’s human rights standards and at better protection measures against domestic violence, at ensuring a proper intervention, as well as improving the legal framework on the protection and non-discrimination of victims.

The project is implemented by the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men in partnership with TRANSCENA, ANAIS, Filia, and GRADO.

The project amounts to EUR 732,000 and is funded through the 2014-2021 Norwegian Financial Mechanism as part of the “Human Rights - National Implementation” call managed by the Romanian Fund for Social Development.

Project activities:

A1 - Creating, developing, and promoting, at a regional, multi-regional, and national level, mechanisms to protect the rights of vulnerable people and measures to combat discrimination and/or to promote human rights, as piloted nationally, placing an emphasis on victims of sex-based discrimination, domestic violence, or gender-based violence. A tripartite Dialogue Mechanism was set up, made up of members of the Interministerial Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence, members of the National Committee for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men and of the County Committee for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men. Moreover, the following were set up: a network of gender discrimination experts that provide courts with specialized opinions about non-discrimination of women and avoiding revictimization; a network of victim support workers who work alongside police officers during domestic violence field interventions to provide support, orientation, and counselling to the victim, based on their consent;

A2 - Setting up and promoting an initial and lifelong professional training programme for judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and police officers on the implementation of international human rights documents ratified by Romania (ECHR, CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention, the Lanzarote Convention) and avoiding procedural irregularities based on which the ECHR ruled against Romania and ordered the country to pay compensations;

A3 - Conducting a national campaign to inform and raise the awareness of the public and of the professionals working in the judicial field and in that of preventing and combating domestic violence and gender-based violence about observing victims’ rights, avoiding revictimization, and non-discrimination. The first stage of the campaign took place both online, on the platform “*Constelația violenței de gen*” (<https://centrulfilia.ro/vdg/>), and offline, through public banners and radio ads. The second stage aimed at informing and sensitizing youngsters between 15 and 19 through in-person sessions conducted in Romanian high schools;

A4 - An online platform <https://viogen.anes.gov.ro/> serving as a resource aimed at informing the general audience; the platform also includes information for professionals in the field, such as judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers, as well as pages dedicated to



reporting abuse in the judicial system (police, prosecutor's offices, courts) and to providing counselling/guidance to vulnerable persons on ways to defend their rights and to file complaints with competent authorities;

A5 - Organizing the VioGen - RoJust online legal caravan, an online initiative aimed at increasing the capacity of national institutions to implement the recommendations derived from ECHR decisions and other specific country recommendations. The caravan included around 600 professionals who work in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence and was organized for all the 15 courts of appeal in Romania;

A6 - Advocacy activities with a view to creating efficient communication mechanisms between various institutional actors holding responsibilities throughout the process of implementing decisions and country recommendations on abuse, domestic violence, and gender-based violence;

A7 - For the professionals in the judicial field, a study was conducted on the relevant caselaw of the ECHR, including good practice examples; the study is available on the platform of the project.

„VioGen RoJust” Project Results

1. Creation and development of mechanisms for protecting the rights of vulnerable persons and measures to combat discrimination and promote human rights, piloted at national level

Mechanisms:

- The Network of Support Assistants for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence and Violence against Women - Created with the aim of providing support to victims in overcoming crisis situations, as well as to professionals within the Romanian Police who interact with them. The piloting of the mechanism, over a period of four months, was carried out in collaboration with Police Precincts No. 4 and No. 7 in Bucharest, with the support of the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police. The mechanism is designed to ensure respect for victims' rights, avoid discrimination and victimization/re-victimization, thus contributing to the empowerment of women in crisis situations.
- The Network of Experts in Gender Discrimination - Created to provide courts of law with specialized counselling, analyses and expert opinions in the field of non-discrimination of women and the avoidance of victimization or re-victimization. The mechanism was piloted over a four-month period, with the support of the Sector 3 and Sector 6 District Courts in Bucharest and the Galați District Court. It aims to support courts by providing expert viewpoints from the network's specialists, facilitating case preparation and contributing to the prevention of victim stigmatization within judicial proceedings.

Measures:

- The Tripartite Dialogue Mechanism - Comprising the Interministerial Committee for the Prevention and Combatting of Domestic Violence, the National Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (CONES), and the County Commissions on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (COJES). Several meetings were organized to ensure



efficient and active dialogue between these structures, as well as to increase responsibility and involvement in the implementation of decisions and country recommendations in the field of human rights;

- Monitoring Tool for Potential Situations of Discrimination against Girls/Women - Created to prevent the occurrence of serious situations of discrimination against the rights of women affected by domestic violence or gender-based violence. With over 1,000 respondents (victims who accessed justice and social systems, as well as professionals working in the field), the tool provides a clearer perspective on victims' experiences of domestic violence in their interaction with the justice system and allows for continuous and systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of public authorities' actions in preventing and combating violence against women.

2. Implementation of a professional training program for professionals with responsibilities in preventing and combating gender-based and domestic violence, regarding the implementation of international documents ratified by Romania

- The training courses, organized as 90 sessions, were carried out between May 2022 and March 2024 for a total of 1,029 police officers, 103 prosecutors, 287 lawyers, 13 judges, and 755 professionals from the social assistance sector;
- Topics addressed included the implementation of ECtHR case law and the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on gender-based violence, sexual offenses committed by adults against minor girls, and victim assistance and protection, taking into account the specificity of each target group and its role. Cases reported by the media and NGOs regarding potential violations of international conventions were also analyzed.

3. National information and awareness-raising campaign on gender-based violence, respect for victims' rights, avoidance of re-victimization and non-discrimination

- Campaign „We Are All Responsible! Let's Stop Gender-Based Violence!”

The campaign aimed to inform and raise awareness among the general public, as well as judicial professionals and those involved in preventing and combating domestic and gender-based violence. The campaign website, www.centrulfilia.ro/vdg, explores the concept of responsibility and how stereotypes, prejudices and lack of involvement circulate in different situations of gender-based violence: emotional abuse in couples, sexual violence, psychological violence in the workplace. Campaign messages reached over 3.5 million users online.

- Campaign “When I Understand, I Can Choose!”

This campaign was carried out in several high schools across the country, addressing young people aged 15 to 19, with the aim of intensifying efforts to promote zero tolerance toward domestic violence and combat gender-based violence. Over 2,000 students and more than 100 teachers participated in the debates “When I Understand, I Can Choose!”. With the support of several students, six scenarios were created highlighting the importance of gender equality and the negative effects of gender-based violence - Media - VIOGEN (transcena.ro) - access the link [here](#).



4. Online platform as a resource hub for informing the public, with a dedicated section for professionals and a component for reporting potential abuses within the judicial system

<https://viogen.anes.gov.ro/>

(access the link)

- Sixteen ECtHR judgments relevant to the field were translated and published on the online platform, in the section dedicated to supporting professionals nationwide, with the aim of developing the professional competencies of all those involved in preventing and combating domestic violence, as well as informing the public and potential victims.

5. Legal Caravan, organized nationwide

- Six hundred professionals involved in preventing and combating domestic violence participated in the 15 events held nationwide, within the jurisdictions of the Courts of Appeal in Romania. The heterogeneous audience was selected primarily to encourage dialogue between professionals from multiple counties and fields, as well as to increase the capacity of national institutions to transpose into practice the recommendations arising from ECtHR judgments and other relevant country-specific recommendations.

6. Advocacy activities to enable the creation of effective communication mechanisms between institutional actors responsible for implementing decisions and country recommendations on abuse, domestic violence and gender-based violence

- Advocacy activities were carried out within the professional training sessions for those working in the prevention and combat of domestic violence.

7. Study on ECtHR case law relevant for judicial professionals and examples of good practice

- The full document can be accessed here:

<https://viogen.anes.gov.ro/biblioteca-virtuala/rapoarte/>