



## WAVE Newsletter March-April 2021

### *Upcoming Events*

#### **2021 WAVE Advisory Board Meeting (ABM)**

We are happy to announce that this year's Spring Advisory Board Meeting will be open to **all WAVE Members** and will be happening **May 19-20**. The WAVE ABM is normally only open to WAVE delegates and co-delegates, but as the meeting will be online and we will be discussing topics that are important for the entire Network, we have decided to allow all Members to join. In the future, we are looking to open up at least half a day of the ABM to all WAVE Members to allow for more engagement within the Network.

**For WAVE Members: please register for the ABM by the 17th of May by following the link sent out to all membership.** Registrations will be approved manually, and we will send you a confirmation email with the Zoom link closer to the date.

The ABM agenda has also been sent out per email, so please keep a look out for it. We will be discussing WAVE's next 4-year strategic plan (2022-2026) and key priorities, so we encourage all Members to take a look at the last 4-year strategic plan overview. **In order to prepare for the breakout room discussion, we ask that Members think about their input beforehand, keeping in mind the three key questions:**

- How does the next 4-year strategic plan need to be adapted to our current needs and in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How can we continue supporting the Istanbul Convention (and other EU Conventions) through the next strategic plan? What new challenges have arisen?
- How can we effectively counter the backlash against women's organisations/rights through the next strategic plan?

#### **The 23<sup>rd</sup> annual WAVE Conference will be happening online on October 6-7, 2021**

The title of this year's conference is **Breaking the Cycle: Preventing and Tackling Sexualized Violence against Women and Children** and is being organized in collaboration in our Portuguese WAVE Member Associação de Mulheres contra a Violência (AMCV).

This year, we have decided to do things a bit differently and are **inviting all Members to send us workshop proposals**. Instead of being a 'mini-panel', we envision that these interactive workshops will actively involve all participants who want to contribute to the discussion.

**Workshop proposals can be submitted until May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Please see the email sent out to WAVE members for further details on what we are looking for and how to submit your proposal.**

We look forward to reading your submissions and to seeing you all virtually at the WAVE Conference in the fall.

## WAVE News

### Welcome new faces!

Introducing our not-so-new-anymore interns:

Adelaide is from Italy. She was born in Sardinia and moved two years ago to study at the University of Bologna. She did her bachelor's in political sciences and is currently completing her master's in International and Diplomatic Sciences. She really enjoys travelling, reading books, and keeping herself well-informed as well as active. She is passionate about gender equality and feminism. She has thus always aimed to enrich her curiosity and passion regarding these issues, hoping to make a difference in the world. She is willing to learn how to connect both research and campaigning to fight gender-based violence.



Verena holds a bachelor's degree in Jewish studies and is currently pursuing her master's in Gender Studies at the University of Vienna. Some of her main interests are body politics, the political economy of violence against women and orientalism/othering. Originally from Germany, she moved to Vienna after school and fell in love with the city. Pre-Covid she was responsible for the awareness team of a Viennese techno collective, aiming to prevent and dealing with sexualized harassment and consent violations during clubbing events. Verena also co-organizes a sex-positive festival usually taking place in Vienna and Berlin. She is part of various queer-feminist and leftist groups, among them an open network that holds a public vigil in response to every femicide committed in Austria.

## International News

### „Sew the threads that lead to a life without violence“

Aleksandra Maratovic, a volunteer of the United Women's Foundation, held a workshop on March 30th in the Brcko District on the topic of “Sewing threads that lead to a life without violence”. The workshop was intended for young people and to raise awareness about gender-based violence. In addition to talking about violence and support services offered in Bosnia and Herzegovina, participants learned how to make embroideries with a symbolic theme.





The workshop was attended by 10 participants and the greatest interest was shown in the topic of gender stereotypes. The participants were also very interested in embroidery, so Aleksandra, who is a professional embroiderer, taught them how to make a gobelin.

During the two-hour workshop, participants embroidered several tapestries on the topic of gender-based violence, connected with each other, and learned a lot about gender equality.



### Council of Europe report on violence against women in France calls for better protection for foreign-born women

The first evaluation of France’s compliance with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention by the Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) highlights the need to provide suitable and accessible services to foreign-born women, and eliminate the discrimination faced by this demographic. The report notes that “discrimination against certain groups of women, for example by law enforcement, the judiciary or service providers, is still widespread”, and that institutional responses must address the lack of accessibility of information about rights, insufficient identification, lack of mobility, inadequate existing support and protection services, and persistent negative stereotypes about these women. To access the GREVIO report, click [here](#). To read more about the Istanbul Convention, click [here](#).



## Uniting Efforts: Ensuring Safety for Women and Girls in Russia in the Context of Covid-19 Epidemic



**Doctors to Children (DTC)**, an interregional NGO from Russia, is evaluating the results of its initiative to ensure safety for women and girls in the situation of domestic violence in the context of the Covid-19 crisis. During the epidemic, our clients came across many emergency situations that required immediate response to stop violence. Within the period of restrictive measures that hindered access to support services, our joint actions allowed for accelerating response to cases of violence and provision of crisis support to women and girls. Today we can report on preliminary results of this project. During the period from June 2020 through April 2021, in 15 regions of Russia, **a total of 183 women** victims of domestic violence, including mothers with children, were provided with crisis support, including emergency accommodation, humanitarian aid and psychological counseling, as well as attorney assistance.

During the epidemic, [DTC's online service for youth](#) received an increased number of requests from youth related to problems of violence, relationships with parents, depression and suicidal thoughts. In order to provide access for online crisis support to a wider audience of youth, DTC expanded the team of online counselors to 63 psychologists. This allowed for **9,422 online consultations** to youth in crisis.

The current crisis has shown that only together can we overcome its consequences, helping those most in need. The project "Women's Safety in the Context of the COVID-19 Epidemic" was implemented with the support of the European Union.

### The Telefono Rosa supports young people



For more than 30 years, Telefono Rosa has offered support to women victims of violence and to their children, welcoming them into the shelter houses run by the Association. Our support does not end when the guests get out from our protected structures, but continues over time. In fact, Telefono Rosa keeps on providing for their future through the process of searching for a house and payment of the rent, the support for education which includes all school material and university fees, as well as medical expenses and other needs that might arise in their daily life.

For this reason, we have launched **SOSTeenGO!** the crowdfunding campaign for the creation of a **Youth Support Fund** for the girls and boys who lived in our shelter houses. Help us to create their future. To participate in the crowdfunding campaign and receive more info, click [here](#).

## Germany: Alternative Report on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence.

The German Istanbul Convention Alliance published its alternative report in February 2021 and sent it to Grevio. You can find it online [here](#).

### Entertainment media as an effective tool for shaping norms and behavior

Social and cultural norms in Azerbaijan have a large impact on individual behavior in a wide variety of contexts, including violence and its prevention, as these norms create an environment that can either facilitate or mitigate violence and its harmful effects. The organization uses the power of social media to transform education and shift societal perceptions around gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms limiting women's rights; improve men's involvement in the caretaking of their children. Behavior change objective partnered with entertainment media is a cost-effective strategy and has reached large segments of the population. The main partners of the organization are bloggers, entertainment producers, radio and internet television representatives.



People actively participate in the entertaining competitions by submitting videos and photos made themselves. By involving them in the process, people go from passive listeners to active performers within the project. By participating in this way, people advocate for change in patriarchal norms that negatively affecting gender equality. The photographs and videos sent by them began to convey messages to other members of society. People as active implementers of the

activities, not passive target groups.

More information is available in Azerbaijani in our social network [here](#). Included are some pictures uploaded by our subscribers for contests in our social network on the theme "Fathers Caring for Daughters."



## What is the impact of Women's Economic Empowerment Programs, implemented in the Republic of Moldova, and how can their efficiency be improved?

Many discussions have been held over the past years about economic empowerment programs for girls and women with different social opportunities, who need support to launch and develop their own business. To assess the efficiency, impact and ways to improve these programs, the Women's Law Centre and Expert-Group Think Tank, with the support of the Embassy of Sweden in the Republic of Moldova, developed the study: [Assessing the impact of support programmes for women's economic empowerment](#).



The study states that, in the Republic of Moldova, women's economic empowerment programmes are at their initial stage, focusing mainly on the professional and economic empowerment of women, and that there are only a few programs addressing the needs of girls and women from vulnerable groups. More information can be found [here](#).

## The situation of domestic violence victims discussed in the Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights

In March we had several additional occasions to advocate for the promotion of women's rights. Ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) was an extremely topical issue this year, as well.

The Women's Law Centre, together with representatives of member organisations of the National Coalition 'Life without Domestic Violence', participated in the meeting held by the Committee for Human Rights and Inter-ethnic Relations and discussed the purposes and provisions of the Istanbul Convention, reasons to ratify it, as well as the existing myths about this international treaty.

At the same time, representatives of the civil society spoke about the benefits offered by ratifying the Convention to domestic violence victims and the society, as a whole, and the steps to be taken by our State towards ratification.

The Republic of Moldova signed the Istanbul Convention on 6 February 2017, being the 44<sup>th</sup> state to sign the treaty. Photo credit: [Parliament of the Republic of Moldova](#).





## Call to withdraw the bill for mandatory shared custody for ALL children in Greece

One of WAVE's Greek members, the **European Anti-Violence Network (EAVN)**, is starting a **campaign against the Greek bill that intends to make shared custody mandatory for ALL children** because it blatantly violates the rights of domestic violence (DV) survivors, several articles of the Istanbul Convention, as well as other legally binding instruments. In the 1st phase, EAVN is collecting signatures from organizations that agree with the arguments in a letter addressed to the Prime Minister of Greece; in the 2nd phase (10-21 of May) they intend to run a campaign via social media; their final aim is the withdrawal of this bill.

Please support this campaign by signing the letter (already sent out to WAVE members per email, but can be requested directly from [info@antiviolence-net.eu](mailto:info@antiviolence-net.eu)) and by sharing it with other organisations. **Signatures will be collected until the 9<sup>th</sup> of May.**

The Bill violates at least 5 IC Articles (31-45-48-26-56), because it provisions:

1. "Joint and evenly exercised parental custody" is the rule for ALL children with separated parents; child must be in physical contact with the parent s/he doesn't reside with, "for at least 1/3 of the total communication time, unless this parent requests shorter time"; child's refusal is considered parental alienation by the other parent, punishable by removal of custody
2. For implementing this rule, parents are mandated to multiple direct contacts and conciliations while, for modifying it, multiple mediations (before-during-after court) recommended or mandated
3. Perpetrator's parental rights/contact with the child can be restricted or ceased only after being irrevocably convicted (more than 10 years in Greece)

Such a Law will further weaken the inadequate protection that is currently provided<sup>1</sup> to domestic violence survivors (mainly mothers and children) in Greece, because it will:

- Expose them to greater risk than they are already in
- Further impede their access to justice

More information can be found [here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> by the Istanbul Convention's Art. 51-53, but also Art. 19, 20 and 22-24 of the 2012/29/EU Directive that are still inactive in Greece: inexistent risk assessment and management; inexistent emergency barring orders; breaches of restraining/protection orders are neither monitored nor punished.

## **“A staircase to heaven would have been good to have, so I could see her again”**

Since 2000, 254 children in Sweden have lost their mothers as a result of deadly violence perpetrated by their (step)fathers. After the murder of their mothers, many of these children have had to remain under the custody of the perpetrators. In March 2021, Unizon decided to reveal the perspective of these children arranging the first and biggest conference of its kind – “*Children that Remained*”. The conference was held in Swedish, but one seminar, given by the Professor John Devaney, Centenary Chair and Head of Social Work at the University of Edinburg, was in English.



Follow the link to see his presentation “[Children Bereaved by Domestic Homicide: Understanding Home, Relationships and Identity](#)” (it starts about 1 hour into the video).

About Unizon: Unizon represents over 130 Swedish women’s shelters, young women’s empowerment centres and other support services working together for a gender equal society free from violence. For more information, visit [unizonjourer.se](http://unizonjourer.se).

### **Social partners’ network and a changed life**

Her mother left her with acquaintances and disappeared. She grew up without love, was a victim of bullying, married at 15, but was not happy; her husband was rapist. It was the final drop, when husband almost killed her...she decided to seek help and run away with two children. Then, she appeared in a shelter. She was referred to [Fund "Sukhumi"](#) and went through psychological rehabilitation via professional courses. Fund "Sukhumi" rented a flat, helped her solve her living situation, health, and employment problems.

Covid-19... she was immediately taken to a clinic and children to the center. Now they are together. However, after the shelter, she is in a difficult situation and needs the partner network to feel stability and security.

Fund “Sukhumi” created a social partners’ network including Fund’s psychologist and lawyer, a lawyer of the shelter, a children’s rights department, and social workers. The pilot network turned out to be successful; it meets periodically, summarizes work, and plans activities ensuring safety of survivors.