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WAVE NEWSLETTER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY THE WAVE NETWORK




APRIL 2025

THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER INCLUDES

- **Strengthening Regional Connection and Collaboration across the WAVE Network**
- **Joining Forces for the Future of Gender Equality**
- **WAVE at the Informal Meeting of EU Equality Ministers on Tech-Facilitated GBV**
- **New Articles: Student-Led Protests and Increase of Violence Against Women in Serbia | Empowering Digital Space via Safe YOU app | Women's Rights in the US and Implications for Global Gender Equality**
- **WAVE Vacancy: Join the WAVE Team as Communications Coordinator**
- **WAVE Voices from**
 - **Armenia: New National Strategy on Gender Equality (2025-2028)**
 - **Albania: Advocacy on First Thematic GREVIO Report**
 - **UK: Why Should Our Rage Be Tidy? Minoritised Survivors' Experiences of Mental Health in the context of Violence-Abuse & 'Make the World a Refuge' wins Film of the Year**
 - **Spain: First OVIM Report: Revealing Institutional Gender-Based Violence & Postgraduate University Project in Feminist Psychology and Psychotherapy**
 - **Romania: "Stay Connected, Love Responsibly" Campaign**
 - **Cyprus: Mapping Cyber Violence Against Women and Girls Across Europe**

This newsletter covers updates from WAVE and our members including political developments from across Europe.

 [FIND HELP on WAVE's database of over 1.440 contacts of women's specialist services!](#)

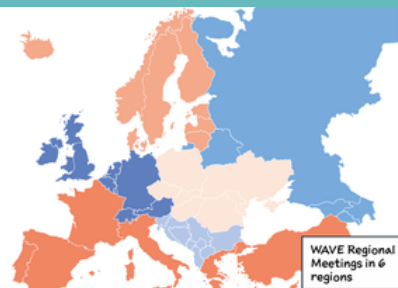
 [Urgent times call for unwavering support!](#)
[Contribute to our Solidarity Fund and be a lifeline for WAVE members in crisis.](#)
[Every donation counts.](#)

WAVE EVENTS

WAVE REGIONAL MEETINGS 2025

WAVE Regional Meetings are a space for feminist exchange, learning, and strategising. Since 2023, WAVE has been bringing members together regionally—and since 2024, we have met in person to deepen connections and strengthen cooperation within six identified regions of the network.

Our regional meetings allow members facing similar political and structural challenges to connect on advocacy, funding, service provision and more. They also help inform WAVE's work by surfacing common concerns and emerging priorities.



WAVE North Europe
Regional Meeting



WAVE South-East Europe
Regional Meeting

From 2–4 April, **31 representatives of WAVE member organisations from North Europe met in Riga, Latvia**, for a dynamic regional meeting, co-organised by the Women's NGOs Cooperation Network of Latvia ([Latvijas Sieviešu nevalstisko organizāciju sadarbības tīkls](#)). A week later, from 9–11 April, **40 representatives of WAVE member organisations from South-East Europe gathered in Split, Croatia**, with the inspiring meeting co-hosted by domine – Organization for the Promotion of Women's Rights ([domine – Organizacija za promicanje ženskih prava](#)). Both events provided valuable opportunities to exchange regional priorities, ranging from political developments and feminist organising to tackling emerging forms of violence against women and girls.

WAVE NEWS

THE FUTURE OF GENDER EQUALITY

The **European Commission's Roadmap for Women's Rights**, launched in March 2025, lays the foundation for the **next Gender Equality Strategy**, highlighting past progress in combating violence against women, improving work-life balance, and advancing gender mainstreaming. **WAVE endorses the Roadmap in line with our commitment to advancing gender equality.** Building on this endorsement, we will continue to actively participate in public consultations and propose measures that enhance the Roadmap's impact, aiming to ensure its integration into the forthcoming Gender Equality Strategy. **We will not stop until gender equality becomes a reality for all.**

[Read the official WAVE statement here!](#)

PREVENTING AND TACKLING TECH-FACILITATED GBV

In turbulent times, dialogue between feminist civil society and policymakers is vital to tackle emerging forms of gender-based violence.

On 15-16 April, WAVE Executive Director Stephanie Futter-Orel spoke on preventing tech-facilitated gender-based violence (GBV) at the informal meeting of EU Equality Ministers, hosted by the Polish Presidency in Warsaw.

In her intervention, she highlighted the need to break the vicious cycle around the rise of tech-facilitated gender-based violence through collective action based on the following core principles:



- **Primary prevention** is key: Tech platforms must embed safety from the start, designing systems that prevent abuse before it happens or before it can be spread (e.g. through gender-sensitive AI). The inclusion of diverse women and their lived experiences in the design process is crucial.
- **Effective implementation of legislation:** Laws such as the EU Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, the EU's Digital Services Act and AI Act hold immense potential, but only if governments, tech companies, and women's specialist services work together to implement them.
- **Collaboration with Women's Specialist Services (WSS)** is key: WSS have decades of expertise in preventing GBV and supporting survivors. They are also guiding tech solutions e.g. through innovate evidence collection apps, and online support services. Their expertise must be included in drafting of policies/actions and crucially, also funded.
- To create real change, we need collective action and **sustainable investment** e.g. by including gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework – because a safer digital world benefits everyone.

WAVE OF CHANGE: 3 NEW ARTICLES

YOUTH PROTESTS IN SERBIA & VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: In the wake of the Novi Sad railway station collapse in Serbia, student-led protests have demanded justice and accountability. Yet women have faced disproportionate violence, both during the protests and in everyday life, raising critical questions about the cost women continue to pay in the fight for justice. Written by 4th generation WAVE Youth Ambassador Teodora Milosavljević, read the full article [here](#).

SAFE YOU LAUNCHES IN POLAND: A DIGITAL SAFE SPACE FOR WOMEN: With the rise of digital tools used to facilitate violence against women and girls, it is crucial to counter this trend and ensure technology is harnessed for prevention and support. WAVE members [Safe YOU](#) and [Feminoteka](#) brought together government officials and civil society actors during the launch of the Safe YOU app in Poland, highlighting the need to enhance women's safety in the digital sphere. Read [here](#).

HOW THE U.S. ABANDONED WOMEN'S RIGHTS AT THE UN—AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR GLOBAL GENDER EQUALITY: Many WAVE members attended the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) in New York last month, including Center for Violence Prevention ([Center for Voldsforebyggelse](#)) from Denmark. In her article, the Center's Director, Ditte Bjerregaard, highlights the U.S. delegation's historic break from international women's rights at CSW69, and what this means for global gender equality efforts. As the U.S. retreats from key gender equality commitments, it is more crucial than ever for feminist movements and civil society actors to unite in defending international norms and resisting the growing anti-gender backlash. Read [here](#).

WAVE VACANCY

WAVE is looking for an **experienced and proactive Communications Coordinator** to ensure effective communications and awareness raising for our network! This is a limited Study Leave Cover position, running **from July 2025 to August 2026**. Applications are now open and are currently being accepted. To apply, please refer to our website [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

updates from WAVE Members and political developments

SHAPING CHANGE: LEGAL, POLICY & ADVOCACY UPDATES

ARMENIA: NEW NATIONAL STRATEGY ON GENDER EQUALITY

On 23 April, the Government of Armenia adopted the **2025–2028 Strategy for the Implementation of Gender Policy**—a milestone in the country’s progress toward gender equality and women’s rights. WAVE member **Women’s Resource Center (WRC)** actively advocated for the strategy’s adoption and contributed key recommendations throughout its development. A major priority is the **prevention and elimination of domestic and gender-based violence**, with actions ranging from **harmonising legislation with the Istanbul Convention to awareness campaigns and training for law enforcement, educators, healthcare workers, and emergency services**. The adoption process received broad media coverage, with the Prime Minister and several ministers publicly highlighting the importance of combating gender stereotypes and ensuring equal rights for all. WRC welcomes this development and remains committed to monitoring implementation and promoting accountability. More info [here](#) and [here](#).

Shared by WRC

ALBANIA: ADVOCACY ON FIRST THEMATIC GREVIO REPORT

WAVE member **Women Centre “Light Steps” (Qendra-Sociale “Hapa te Lehte”)** held an **advocacy meeting** in the Municipal Council Hall of Vau i Dejës to **advance the implementation of GREVIO’s recommendations from its First Thematic Report on Albania**. The meeting brought together representatives from the Interdisciplinary Technical Team, the Municipal Council, civil society, and other key actors working on domestic and gender-based violence.

During the presentation of GREVIO’s Report, the main recommendations were discussed with a focus on several key points. Topics included the need to ensure staff stability in public institutions who have built **capacities to address domestic violence** as well as the **growing issue of cyber violence**. Participants also highlighted the need to **strengthen legal frameworks, develop training programmes** for public employees, and **enhance healthcare professionals’ role** in reporting violence.

The activity was carried out by the Women’s Center “Light Steps” as part of the Gender-Based Violence Monitoring Network, coordinated by the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives, with the support of UN Women Albania, within the framework of the United Nations Joint Programme “Ending Violence Against Women,” funded by the Government of Sweden and implemented by three UN agencies: UN Women, UNDP, and UNFPA.

Shared by Women Centre “Light Steps”



BUILDING KNOWLEDGE: NEW RESEARCH AND REPORTS

UK: MINORITISED SURVIVORS' EXPERIENCES OF MENTAL HEALTH

Black and minoritised women across the UK are facing a mental health emergency - one fuelled by violence, systemic racism, and institutional neglect. WAVE member **Imkaan's latest report, Why Should Our Rage Be Tidy?**, produced with Prof. Ravi Thiara from the University of Warwick and Women & Girls Network, centres the lived experiences of survivors navigating the **intersecting impacts of domestic and sexual violence, trauma, and racialised injustice**.



The report exposes how systems meant to offer support instead retraumatise: misdiagnosing, silencing, and failing to provide culturally competent, trauma-informed care. Drawing on survivor testimony and frontline expertise, it calls for a radical **reimagining of mental health and VAWG services** - rooted in dignity, healing, and justice. In addition to this, the report is accompanied by a Survivor's Charter, outlining the **rights and principles that must underpin any service response to Black and minoritised women's mental health**. This is more than a report - it is a demand for structural change, led by those most impacted. Read [here](#).

Shared by Imkaan

SPAIN: FIRST OVIM REPORT

The **Observatory on Institutional Gender Violence (OVIM)**, a project led by WAVE member Hèlia (Associació de suport a les Dones que pateixen Violència de Gènere) and formed by diverse feminist organisations in Spain, will present its **first report on institutional gender-based violence** at a public event in **Barcelona on 9 May**, which will be held in Spanish and streamed on YouTube. The full report will be available on the same day. The report, based on testimonies and data collected over the last year, identifies the systemic abuses in public institutions that women and children who experience gender-based violence face once they decide to seek support from an institutional service. The report focuses on the justice sector and the patterns of rights violations observed. However, it also explores institutional violence in the police, health, social and specialised sectors.



More Information:

- OVIM website: <https://ovim.org/>
- Streaming: <https://www.youtube.com/live/te2x42VBbSQ>

Shared by Hèlia

PUSHING ACTION: CAMPAIGN & PROJECT UPDATES

ROMANIA: STAY CONNECTED, LOVE RESPONSIBLY CAMPAIGN

This spring, WAVE member **A.L.E.G. Association** (Asociația pentru libertate și egalitate de gen), in partnership with AVON Space, ran the **"Stay Connected, Love Responsibly" campaign in high schools** in Romania. Over **1,000 students from 6 cities** participated in interactive workshops.



On the other hand, a lack of connection and empathy make dialogue difficult. That is precisely why it is **essential to continue creating safe spaces for relationship education**, which result in lasting impact. The campaign offered teenagers a safe framework for honest questions and non-judgmental answers, encouraging them to build balanced grounded relationships without neglecting the scale of the challenges they face.

Shared by A.L.E.G.

CYPRUS: CYBEREQUAL PROJECT

Through the Erasmus+ **CyberEqual project**, WAVE member Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (**SPAVO**) and its partners in Greece, Slovakia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Cyprus conducted research to map the landscape of Cyber Violence Against Women and Girls (CVAWG) across Europe. The project aims to **educate and empower young people to recognise and respond to digital violence**, while raising awareness about its harmful consequences.

The survey gathered data from 467 young women and girls aged 15–35, including participants from urban, rural, and migrant backgrounds. It explored the forms, impacts, and prevalence of CVAWG, and identified critical gaps in support, prevention, and policy response at both national and EU levels. The findings emphasise the urgent need for targeted interventions, improved support mechanisms, and greater public awareness.

This cross-country survey on CVAWG reveals alarming trends in prevalence, underreporting, support-seeking, and perceived barriers to justice – with 76% of respondents having experienced, witnessed, or known someone affected by CVAWG.

For more information about CyberEqual and the upcoming results visit [here](#).

Shared by SPAVO



SPAIN: POSTGRADUATE UNIVERSITY PROJECT ON FEMINIST PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

WAVE member **Association of Feminist Psychology and Psychotherapy (APPF)** has observed the iatrogenic effects of patriarchal practices in psychological intervention, especially in psychotherapy, including those aimed at victims of gender-based violence. Therefore, APPF has **developed a postgraduate university project in Feminist Psychology and Psychotherapy for the 2024/2025 academic year at the Complutense University of Madrid**. It is directed by APPF members. Focus: generating questions and answers around what would make a psychological intervention in psychotherapy feminist to mitigate the harmful effects of androcentric therapies, especially on girls, boys, and women.

The next edition can also be taken online, see [information and enrolment](#).

Shared by APPF

UK: MAKE THE WORLD A REFUGE

'**Make the World a Refuge**', a powerful short film by **WAVE member** [Refuge](#), has won **Charity Film of the Year 2025** at the Smiley Charity Film Awards. Created in partnership with Refuge ambassador and actor Billie Piper, creative agency AMV BBDO, and directed by BAFTA-winner Georgi Banks-Davies, the film **explores the many forms of domestic abuse through real survivor testimonies**.

Piper voices these stories, highlighting coercive control, tech-facilitated abuse, financial abuse, and physical violence, while protecting survivors' identities. She described the film's impact as "truly remarkable" and stressed the importance of recognising abuse in all its forms. Refuge CEO Gemma Sherrington said she was "thrilled" the film received such an "impressive accolade", while Head of Communications Laura Burnell, who accepted the award, said: "It was a proud moment to honour the bravery of the survivors whose stories made the film possible." More here: <https://refuge.org.uk/news/make-the-world-a-refuge-wins-film-of-the-year/>

Shared by Refuge



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VIOLENCE EUROPE**



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WAVE on Bluesky



WAVE on YouTube



WAVE on Spotify