

Funded by the
European Union



WAVE NEWSLETTER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY THE WAVE NETWORK



DECEMBER 2023



*The WAVE team wishes you
joyous holidays and a wonderful new year*

As 2023 concludes, we express sincere thanks to the WAVE Network as well as women's human rights defenders and feminist activists around the world. Your unwavering dedication has been instrumental in our mission to prevent, tackle and ultimately end violence against women and girls. Looking ahead to 2024, we anticipate ongoing collaboration and the strengthening of our collective efforts.

Wishing you safety and prosperity in the new year!

Dear fellow dedicated feminist activists,
we are happy to share with you the last WAVE
Newsletter of the year. Let's find out what happened
inside and outside WAVE in December 2023!

THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER INCLUDES

- **WAVE 16 Days Of Activism 2023,**
- **Welcoming JUNIPER into the WAVE Network,**
- **WAVE's Insights and Updated Proposed Amendments to the Victims' Rights Directive,**
- **Women's Rights Amidst Conflict and Crisis,**
- **Addressing Gender-Based Violence During and After Conflict,**
- **Toolkit for victim-friendly judicial practice in child custody, contact and visitation matters,** and
- **WAVE voices from Serbia, Romania and Armenia.**

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

WAVE EVENTS



Throughout this year's impactful 16 Days of Activism campaign, we delved into the theme "**The Power of Diverse Feminist Activism: Shaping Equality and Women's Human Rights**". Our efforts spanned both online and in-person realms, featuring a dynamic mix of webinars, engaging videos, thought-provoking podcast episodes, and impactful social media campaigns. **These activities collectively highlighted the many ways activism can propel women's human rights forward and nurture gender equality.** From influencing legislative change and powerful advocacy to responsible media reporting, providing access to vital information, and exploring activism, we celebrated the multifaceted **power of feminist activism** in creating positive, lasting change.

[WATCH OUR #16DAYS2023 VIDEOS SHOWCASING THE POWER OF DIVERSE FEMINIST ACTIVISM!](#)

[LISTEN TO OUR #16DAYS2023 PODCAST EPISODES AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF DIVERSE FEMINIST ACTIVISM!](#)

WAVE NEWS

WELCOMING A NEW WAVE MEMBER INTO THE NETWORK

We are delighted to close out the year on a high note! In December, WAVE welcomed one new WAVE member organisation into our network. Meet **JUNIPER** ([Fundacja Juniper](#)) from Poland. Thank you to all WAVE members who have joined the WAVE Network and are part of our WAVE of change! Find out how to become a WAVE member [HERE](#).



EMPOWERING VICTIM SUPPORT

WAVE has been closely monitoring the European Parliament's discussions concerning the proposed revision of the **Victims' Rights Directive**, unveiled by the European Commission earlier this year in June. **With a focus on advocating for Women's Specialist Services, WAVE conducted an in-depth analysis of the proposed changes**, aiming to align this revision with the current standards on victims' rights. **Our primary emphasis has been on ensuring specialised support for vulnerable groups.**

[READ THE WAVE ANALYSIS HERE!](#)

AMPLIFYING VOICES: WOMEN'S RIGHTS AMIDST CONFLICT AND CRISIS

On the **World Human Rights Day**, 10 December, WAVE published a statement affirming our steadfast commitment to safeguarding the rights of all civilians globally, through our work within Europe. **We place particular emphasis on upholding the rights of women, children, and vulnerable groups who endure heightened vulnerabilities during times of peace and especially in periods of conflict and war.** Together, let us strive towards a future where women's rights are upheld and where conflicts no longer perpetuate gender-based violence and discrimination.

[READ THE WAVE STATEMENT HERE!](#)

ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DURING AND AFTER CONFLICT

WAVE members **Women Fund Sukhumi**, Georgia (ქალთა ფონდი "სოხუმი"), **Foundation United Women Banja Luka**, Bosnia & Herzegovina ("Udružene žene" Banja Luka) and **Sexual Assault Crisis Center**, Armenia (Սեռական բռնության ճգնաժամային կենտրոն) recently conducted **trainings** in their countries about the topic of **gender-based violence during and after conflict and how to better prevent and tackle it**. These members developed a **training manual** as part of a project led by WAVE and funded by the OSCE. After this pilot phase, **the training manual will be published at the beginning of 2024** and will be available to all organisations that would like to conduct trainings on this topic and involve different stakeholders.

TOOLKIT FOR VICTIM-FRIENDLY JUDICIAL PRACTICE IN CHILD CUSTODY, CONTACT AND VISITATION MATTERS



Safety as the best interest of the child
Toolkit for victim-friendly judicial practice in
child custody, contact and visitation matters
SAFEGUARDING AND EMPOWERING CHILDREN PROJECT



[Access the Toolkit here!](#)

In collaboration with experts from four member organisations, WAVE developed a **toolkit for victim-friendly judicial practice in child custody, contact and visitation matters** within the WAVE project "Safeguarding and Empowering Children". WAVE members involved in the project are the **Autonomous Women's House Zagreb** (Autonomna Ženska Kuća Zagreb) from Croatia, **NANE Women's Rights Association** (Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen) from Hungary, the **ZIF - Central Information Office of Autonomous Women's Shelters** (Zentrale Informationsstelle Autonomer Frauenhäuser) from Germany, and the **Women's Rights Foundation** (WRF) from Malta. WAVE also included the expertise of Hague Mothers based in the UK, on a consultancy basis.

This Toolkit provides insights on promising practice/recommendations for more child-friendly custody proceedings across Europe. This document can be used interdisciplinarily and serves to help to improve the institutional/judicial practice taking place before courts, administrative authorities, and all other bodies that have responsibility in custody and visitation procedures. The aim is to address the linkage between protection against domestic violence and decisions on custody and visitation rights. Therefore, **with this toolkit, the protection and best interests of children are brought into focus.**

[MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT](#)

["SAFEGUARDING AND EMPOWERING CHILDREN" HERE!](#)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

updates from WAVE Members and political developments



#ImašPravoNaPodršku

MAXIMIZING AVAILABILITY OF FREE LEGAL AID FOR GBV SURVIVORS

WAVE member **Fenomena Association** (Fenomena) promotes free legal aid (FLA) for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in Serbia and has initiated the online legal information and support platform for beneficiaries: www.pravneinformacijezazrtvenasilja.rs

The implementation of laws in Serbia remains unsatisfactory, while women's specialist services' work in providing FLA is marginalised within the new FLA-system introduced by the state. Fenomena has been working with municipalities, law faculties and regional bar associations since 2021 (with the support of the EU and UN Women) and in 2023/2024 with the support of the Legal Empowerment Fund aims to **enhance sensitivity and build capacities among law professionals throughout Serbia, enabling them to provide adequate FLA to GBV survivors.**

Previous reports on the implementation of FLA law underline the low number of requests by GBV survivors but also highlight the withdrawal of the requests related to domestic violence. Fenomena also works to increase awareness of citizens and beneficiaries about new legislation and their rights to free legal aid.



Written by WAVE member in Serbia Fenomena Association ([Fenomena](#))

10 YEARS OF NECUVINTE

On 6 December, **WAVE member Necuvinte Association** celebrated a significant milestone: a decade of making a difference. Necuvinte gathered with dedicated volunteers, valued partners, collaborators, and cherished friends to mark this incredible journey with joy and reflection. **"Our heartfelt thanks for your unwavering support and collaborative spirit throughout the year. Your positive energy propels us to reach for greater heights, year after year. Looking ahead, we aspire to continue this impactful journey together, building a brighter future. As we approach the year's end, we are filled with gratitude for the ongoing support from everyone and the countless lives we have touched."**

Over the past decade, Necuvinte empowered thousands in the legal system, supported thousands of refugees, provided aid to numerous beneficiaries, and enlightened countless young minds through workshops on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) related issues.

Thank you for being part of our story!

Written by WAVE member in Romania Necuvinte Association

DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, SAME CHALLENGES

During this year's 16 Days of Activism, WAVE member **Sensiblu Foundation** ([Fundăția Sensiblu](#)) brought together an interactive awareness group addressed to women from the Suceava community, including refugees from Ukraine, which was the first of its kind in Suceava. The central theme of the event – Different languages, Same challenges – illustrated today's reality and underlined that **violence against women is not linked to geographical or cultural boundaries. It is a phenomenon that can affect anyone, regardless of age, ethnicity or nationality.**

The discussions focused on the various forms of violence against women as well as ways to counter them. In the practical session, participants focused on stimulating self-confidence and supporting each other through encouraging messages, contributing to creating an atmosphere of collective empowerment and understanding. Lastly, the participants had the opportunity to explore the online platforms [SafeCity](#) and [LoveMessages](#).

Written by WAVE member in Romania [Sensiblu Foundation \(Fundăția Sensiblu\)](#)

ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF GBV TO THE ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER

WAVE member **Women's Resource Center** ([WRC](#)), is a founding member of the **Coalition to Stop Violence against Women** which joins 10 local organisations. The Coalition initiated a meeting with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan. WRC's Executive Director actively participated in this meeting, where crucial matters pertaining to women's rights were addressed.



Emphasising the significance of ratifying the Istanbul Convention, WRC reiterated that Armenia had signed this convention in 2018. It is noteworthy that, during the meeting, WRC underscored **the pressing need for the formal ratification of the Istanbul Convention in Armenia**. This reaffirmation of the urgency reflects the collective commitment to addressing and combating violence against women in Armenia.

Written by WAVE member in Armenia [Women's Resource Center \(Կանանց ռեսուրսային կենտրոն ՀԿ\)](#)

FIGHTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE DURING THE 16 DAYS 2023

WAVE member **Sexual Assault Crisis Center (SACC)** actively participated in the 16 Days of Activism campaign 2023 and organised 4 main events:

1. "Business and Human Rights in Preventing Violence Against Women" meeting-discussion
2. "Cult of the Hymen in Armenian Society: Myths and Stereotypes" meeting-discussion
3. Presentation of the two research-studies on sexual violence: conference
4. «North Country» movie screening

These events were diverse in format and rich in content. Each event uniquely contributed to the global theme of investing in preventive measures against violence towards women and girls.



The presentation of two pivotal research studies "**Sexual Harassment in Educational Institutions**" supported by the United Nations Trust Fund for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and "**Women on Sexualized Violence: Perceptions and Experience**" backed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), was organised on 4 December.

During the presentation of the research studies representatives from State institutions like the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports and the Human Rights Defender of Armenia Anahit Manasyan were present. Representatives of civil society organisations and human rights activists, as well as the ambassador of Sweden and delegates from the French Embassy in Armenia and the Embassy of Spain also were invited to take part in the event.

Written by WAVE member in Armenia Sexual Assault Crisis Center ([Սեռական բռնության ճգնաժամային կենտրոն](#))



[@womenagainstviolenceeurope](#)



[@womenagainstviolenceeurope](#)



[@WAVE_Europe](#)



[wave-network.org](#)