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# WAVE NEWSLETTER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY THE WAVE NETWORK



MARCH 2024

Dear fellow dedicated feminist activists,  
we are happy to share with you the third WAVE Newsletter of the new year. Let's find out what happened inside and outside WAVE in March 2024!

## THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER INCLUDES

- **The 1st WAVE Regional Meeting took place in Bucharest, Romania,**
- **Acceptance with Reservations: WAVE's Stance on the EU Directive,**
- **Investing in Women, Defeating Femicide: WAVE's Declaration for International Women's Day,**
- **WAVE's external activities in March,**
- **The WAVE Annual Activity Report is published,**
- **WAVE's social media campaign on Women's Specialist Services,**
- **WAVE voices from France, Belgium, Armenia, Croatia, Georgia, Greece and Spain.**

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

# WAVE EVENTS

## FIRST WAVE REGIONAL MEETING



The **first WAVE Regional Meeting** took place in Bucharest, Romania, from 20-22 March 2024. Co-organised with WAVE member Necuvinte Association ([Asociația Necuvinte](#)), this gathering brought together WAVE members from **East Central Europe**. During the three-day event, we welcomed **more than 30 participants from 7 countries** to share **insights and trends** on violence against women and domestic violence including **legislation**, among other, across the region.

The first regional meeting was a huge success and we thank all our members for participating as well as co-organisers Necuvinte for making this event possible.

💡 Event tip: The **5th World Conference of Women's Shelters (5WCWS)** will be held in Sydney, Australia, from 15-18 September 2025 and is expected to draw 1000+ delegates from 100+ countries. More information on the world's largest conference by and for women's shelters and those working to end gender-based violence here: <https://worldshelterconference.org/>

# WAVE NEWS

## WAVE'S STANCE ON THE EU DIRECTIVE

While we acknowledge the importance of the proposed **EU Directive on Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence** as a significant step forward, our response is nuanced, reflecting a blend of cautious optimism and disappointment stemming from **notable gaps in the legislation**.

[READ WAVE'S STATEMENT HERE AND STAND UNITED WITH US!](#)

## INVESTING IN WOMEN, DEFEATING FEMICIDE

On 8 March, **International Women's Day 2024**, WAVE joined the global feminist collective in a resounding call to "**Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress**". Furthermore, we emphasised the critical importance of proactive measures to **prevent and address femicide** across Europe and beyond.

[READ OUR COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT HERE!](#)

## IMPRESSIONS OF SOME OF WAVE'S EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES THIS MONTH

### CSW68

This **sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** took place in New York from 11-22 March 2024, tackling the priority theme **“Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective”**. Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited NGOs from all regions of the world were contributing to the session, including WAVE member representatives.

[READ WAVE'S CSW68 STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS HERE!](#)

### 55th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland

WAVE together with our US-partners the Advocates of Human Rights, **presented NGO recommendations relevant for the next universal periodic review (UPR) of several UN member states**, to improve the situation of women’s rights, violence against women and the criminal justice system (incl in relation to the death penalty). We presented recommendations for: Afghanistan, Eritrea, Cambodia, Cyprus, North-Macedonia, Vietnam and Yemen and were able to secure support by several member states to endorse those recommendations. WAVE also learnt about other **UN mechanisms available to NGOs to hold their governments accountable** in an increasingly hostile global political situation for women’s human rights defenders.

### Supporting Migrant and Refugee Women - Valencia, Spain

On 25 March, our Senior Advocacy Advisor, Eliana Jimeno, attended a roundtable discussion in Valencia, Spain, hosted by WAVE member Por Ti Mujer, to delve deep into the **impact of the EU Directive on VAW and DV on migrant and refugee women**, emphasizing the **critical need for an intersectional approach in all EU legislation**. One key point raised was the absence of a robust firewall in the Directive to protect migrant women when reporting cases of VAW & DV. The event gathered over 30 representatives from feminist CSOs, government response units, and Por Ti Mujer’s team. On 26 March, the dialogue continued at the **first National Forum about Sexual Violence on Migrant Women Domestic and Care Workers**.



## WAVE ACTIVITY REPORT 2023



[DOWNLOAD THE REPORT HERE!](#)

## ONLINE CAMPAIGN ON WSS

From 14–26 March, WAVE presented the social media campaign entitled "**The Blueprint of Women's Specialist Services (WSS)**". Through "10 Insights", we highlighted the **unique approach** these feminist services take in **preventing and addressing gender-based violence against women**. Check out the hashtag **#BlueprintOfWSS** on WAVE's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), and support this campaign, celebrating and spotlighting the invaluable contributions of WSS.

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

updates from WAVE Members and political developments

## FREEDOM OF ABORTION IN THE FRENCH CONSTITUTION

With the constitutional law of 8 March 2024, **France becomes the first country in the world to recognise in its Constitution the freedom to abortion**, which is solely the discretion of the woman. WAVE member **National Federation of Women's Solidarity** ([Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes](#)) welcomes this historic decision, which is a message of hope sent to all women even beyond the French borders. It is a reaffirmation of the right of all women in France to make free choices about their bodies. It sends a strong message to the international community at a time when women's rights are being threatened and attacked around the world. This symbolic step forward must be accompanied by an improvement in access to abortion on French territory, so that this guaranteed freedom is the same for all.

Written by WAVE member in France

**National Federation of Women's Solidarity** ([Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes](#))

## REPORT ON OBSTETRICAL VIOLENCE

The Belgian parliament has just adopted its **first official report on obstetrical violence** (in French and Dutch). It has been launched on the initiative of the Ecolo party and has been established after a series of auditions of sexual and reproductive health professionals, feminist NGOs and lawyers that started in 2021. It includes **93 policy recommendations to ensure women's right to bodily autodetermination and the prevention of obstetrical violence** and is said to be the first such parliamentary report in Europe. More information [HERE](#).

Shared by WAVE member in Belgium [Garance ASBL](#)



## ADVANCING WOMEN'S RIGHTS: ANALYSING ARMENIA'S PROGRESS ON UN RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

On 26 March, WAVE member **Women's Resource Center** (Կանանց ռեսուրսային կենտրոն ՀԿ) convened a crucial discussion gathering representatives from the diplomatic community, international, and local organisations in Armenia. The aim was to shed light on and deliberate the **advancements made concerning the recommendations issued to Armenia by the UN treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council** during the period spanning 2020 to 2023. Anush Poghosyan, the Executive Director of the Women's Resource Center, highlighted in her address that the Human Rights Council will assess Armenia's human rights progress through the Universal Periodic Review in 2025.



This underscores the urgency to swiftly implement past recommendations and gear up for forthcoming ones. During the meeting, the speakers outlined the recommendations and concluding observations directed towards Armenia by UN bodies, focusing on women's rights, safeguarding women's human rights defenders, and combating discrimination.

Written by WAVE member in Armenia  
**Women's Resource Center** (Կանանց ռեսուրսային կենտրոն ՀԿ)

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## STRENGTHENING COOPERATION IN ISSUES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICTS - NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In February, WAVE member **Centre for Women War Victims - ROSA** (Centar za Žene Žrtve Rata (CŽŽR) – ROSA), with the support of Vice President of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and British Embassy Zagreb, held a round table “Strengthening cooperation in issues of sexual violence in conflicts - national and international perspective”. This expert meeting brought together representatives of five competent Croatian ministries, the State Attorney's Office, CSOs, institution, and experts from the academic community with the aim of exchanging experiences in relation to the issue of sexual violence in war, prosecuting perpetrators, realising the rights of victims, cooperating with other states in conflicts and finding a global response to this ubiquitous problem.



Conclusions brought out at this round table are of big importance considering that this topic is still relevant in Croatian society, because trials for war crimes are still ongoing and many victims of sexual violence in the war have not exercised their rights. More information [HERE](#).

Written by WAVE member in Croatia  
**Centre for Women War Victims - ROSA** (Centar za Žene Žrtve Rata (CŽŽR) – ROSA)

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## RECOGNITION OF BAIJA PATARAIA WITH THE MEDAL OF HONOUR AND CALL FOR A STATE APOLOGY TO KHANUM JEIRANOVA'S CHILDREN BY GEORGIA'S PRESIDENT

WAVE member **Sapari** (საფარო) is thrilled to share that during the International Women's Day ceremony on 8 March at the President's residence, President Salome Zourabichvili of Georgia honoured **Sapari's Executive Director Baia Patariaia** with the **Medal of Honour**.

This is the first time that a women's rights defender has been granted this prestigious award **in recognition of her outstanding commitment to advancing women's rights and women's empowerment, combating gender-based violence, and fostering a peaceful environment**. Moreover, at the same event, President Zourabichvili addressed the **tragic case of Khanum Jeiranova**, a victim of GBV and honour crime. The UN Women's Rights Committee urges Georgia to prosecute the perpetrators, provide reparations, and offer an official apology to Ms. Jeiranova's children. So far no official apology has been issued and President Zourabichvili called upon the government to fully fulfil CEDAW's recommendations in the Jeiranova case. More information [HERE](#).

Written by WAVE member in Georgia  
Sapari ([საფარი](#))

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### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO ELIMINATE DOMESTIC ABUSE

The ISEDA project (Innovative Solutions to Eliminate Domestic Abuse) is a **Horizon Europe project** gathering **15 partners from 9 countries**.



Its total budget is 3 million €, received from the EU's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme and from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee. **The project aims to combat and eliminate domestic violence by employing an enriched European approach, utilising modern technological tools and practices and improved multi-sectoral expertise in its activities.** Find out how this looks like here: <https://iseda-project.eu>

Written by WAVE member in Greece  
European Anti-Violence Network ([Ευρωπαϊκό Δίκτυο κατά της Βίας](#))

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### FIRST OBSERVATORY OF INSTITUTIONAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SPAIN

On 15 March, WAVE member **Hèlia Association** ([Associació Hèlia](#)) hosted the public presentation of the "**Observatorio de Violencias Institucionales Machistas**" ([Observatory of Institutional Gender-based Violence, OVIM](#)) in Spain, promoted by Hèlia and Almena Cooperativa Feminista, along with more than 20 civil society organisations and four individual experts. OVIM is a **civil society platform focused on social and political advocacy** that is monitoring institutions that do not act with due diligence. Its main goal, therefore, is to **monitor, from a feminist, intersectional and anti-racist perspective, the production of institutional gender-based violence by public institutions, organisations, services, and professionals**, in order to demand, through collective strategies, action from the State where it assumes its responsibility to guarantee a life free of gender-based violence for all of us. More information [HERE](#). Follow OVIM on social media [@ovim\\_es!](#)

Written by WAVE member in Spain  
Hèlia Association ([Associació Hèlia](#))



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[wave-network.org](http://wave-network.org)