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WAVE NEWSLETTER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY THE WAVE NETWORK




MAY 2025

THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER INCLUDES

- **27th WAVE Conference “Feminist Solidarity and Collective Action: Reclaiming our Power to End Violence Against Women” in Bucharest, Romania, from 22–23 September 2025**
- **WAVE Spring Advisory Board Meeting 2025**
- **One Year Since the Adoption of the EU Directive on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence: A Call for Inclusive, Ambitious Implementation**
- **WAVE's External Representation: OSCE, Sila Project, European Parliament and Austria's NAP-VAW Kick-Off Meeting**
- **New Articles: Why Feminist Sexuality Education Matters | Intersectionality in Emergencies: Migration, Gender and Exclusion in Post-Disaster Management**
- **WAVE Youth Ambassadors Capacity Building Event 2025**
- **WAVE Voices from**
 - **Serbia: New Research on the Concept of “Parental Alienation” & Court Practices**
 - **Moldova: Empowering Survivors through the Ana Fund**
 - **England: Tech Safety Summit to tackle Technology-Facilitated and Economic Abuse**
 - **Armenia: Review at UPR 49th Session: Receives Strong Recommendations on Gender-Based Violence & Research on Legal Mechanisms and Implementation Methods Regarding Domestic Violence in 2025**

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

SAVE THE DATE: WAVE CONFERENCE 2025

The 27th WAVE Conference entitled “Feminist Solidarity and Collective Action: Reclaiming our Power to End Violence Against Women” will take place in Bucharest, Romania, from 22–23 September 2025.

Across Europe, women’s specialist services (WSS) are standing strong on the frontlines—despite funding cuts, rising anti-feminist rhetoric, and political pushback. This moment demands not silence, but collective action. For numerous decades, WSS have been lifelines for women and girls, driving social change, shaping policy, and providing crucial support. Now is the time to reaffirm that legacy, amplify our feminist solidarity, and come together in our full strength.

Organised in cooperation with Romanian WAVE members A.L.E.G. Association for liberty and equality of gender ([Asociația pentru libertate și egalitate de gen](#)), Anais Association ([Asociația Anais](#)), Necuvinte Association ([Asociația Necuvinte](#)), and Dr. Max Foundation (Fundăția Dr. Max).

 [More details on our website!](#)

WAVE SPRING ADVISORY BOARD MEETING 2025

From 5–7 May 2025, the WAVE Spring Advisory Board Meeting took place in Vienna, Austria. We welcomed the WAVE Board, Delegates, and Co-Delegates from across Europe for three days of strategic discussions aimed at strengthening the network both internally and externally. The focus was on coordination, joint planning, and identifying new opportunities to advance our mission of ending violence against women and girls.



WAVE NEWS

ONE YEAR SINCE ADOPTION OF THE EU DIRECTIVE ON VAW AND DV

On 14 May 2024, the **EU made history by adopting its first-ever Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence**. One year later, WAVE marks this significant achievement while reiterating the **need for strong, inclusive implementation and meaningful collaboration with feminist civil society & Women's Specialist Services as frontline experts**.

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

WAVE'S EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION

FINNISH OSCE CHAIRPERSONSHIP CONFERENCE ON GENDER EQUALITY

From 6–7 May 2025, the **Finnish OSCE Chairpersonship Conference on Gender Equality** took place in Vienna under the theme "**Building Resilience through Inclusion and Empowerment**". WAVE was represented by Project & Research Coordinator **Elena Floriani**, with member organisation representatives **Halyna Fedkovych** ([Ukraine](#)) and **Veronica Teleuca** ([Moldova](#)) contributing as panellists. Discussions focused on gender equality challenges across the OSCE region, including the **situation in Ukraine and the shrinking space for women's NGOs**.

[More HERE.](#)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT EVENT ON CONSENT-BASED LEGISLATION

On 19 May, a workshop entitled "**Consent-based rape legislation in the EU**" was organised by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens, Equality and Culture, upon request by the FEMM Committee. **The discussion explored the legal landscape across Member States, awareness-raising efforts, and the centrality of active consent**. WAVE was represented by member organisation representative **Donna von Allemann** ([Ireland](#)), who underscored that consent must be clearly and actively communicated.

[More HERE.](#)

SILA PROJECT MEETING: ADEQUATE, LONG-TERM SUPPORT BASED ON FEMINIST PRINCIPLES

On 12–13 May, WAVE's Project & Research Coordinator **Elena Floriani** participated in the **Sila Project Meeting** in Tunis, Tunisia. Speaking on a panel about long-term support for women survivors of violence, Elena shared insights from European NGOs and highlighted the **central role of feminist organisations, best placed to support survivors**. Her intervention emphasised the need for sustainable funding of feminist organisations, cross-sector collaboration, and innovative, sustainable support mechanisms.

[More HERE.](#)

KICK-OFF MEETING FOR AUSTRIA'S NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

On 20 May, WAVE's Executive Director **Stephanie Futter-Orel** joined the **kick-off meeting for Austria's new National Action Plan on Violence Against Women** (NAP-VAW), hosted by the Federal Ministry for Women, Science and Research. WAVE welcomes the **inclusion of women's specialist services** in this process and remains committed to supporting a strong NAP-VAW –one that shifts focus from reaction to **prevention and tackles the root causes of violence through investing in long-term, systemic change**. [More HERE.](#)

WAVE OF CHANGE: NEW ARTICLES

💡 In May, we published two new articles in our online magazine "WAVE of Change":

WHY FEMINIST SEXUALITY EDUCATION MATTERS

Laura Seidl, 4th generation **WAVE Youth Ambassador** from Austria, reflects on the lack of comprehensive sexuality education. Grounded in research and lived experience, her article highlights how **feminist, intersectional approaches to sexuality education are key to preventing violence, challenging gender norms, and empowering young people**. It makes a compelling case, recognising sexuality education as a fundamental right. [Read HERE.](#)

INTERSECTIONALITY IN EMERGENCIES: MIGRATION, GENDER AND EXCLUSION IN POST-DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN THE REGION OF VALENCIA

This article by WAVE member **Por Ti Mujer** highlights the devastating impact of the 2024 DANA disaster in Valencia, Spain, with a particular focus on migrant women, as the tragedy exacerbated their pre-existing vulnerabilities. It calls for a **more inclusive, gender-sensitive approach to reconstruction and recovery processes**. [Read HERE.](#)

WAVE YOUTH AMBASSADORS CAPACITY BUILDING EVENT

From 17–18 May, the **WAVE Youth Ambassadors** gathered in Vienna for this year's capacity-building event. The first day focused on **feminist resistance in practice**, with youth worker and coach Katja Kloimstein guiding the group through **non-violent responses to intrusive behaviour, setting boundaries, and staying grounded in feminist values**. On the second day, the ambassadors met at the WAVE office to reflect on the training and brainstorm ideas for future collaboration. We are excited to keep building with this inspiring group!



[WAVE Youth Ambassadors on Facebook](#)



[WAVE Youth Ambassadors on Instagram](#)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

updates from WAVE Members and political developments

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE: NEW RESEARCH AND REPORTS

SERBIA: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HIDDEN BEHIND THE CONCEPT OF "PARENTAL ALIENATION"

The new research of **WAVE member Autonomous Women's Center (Autonomi Zenski Centar)** "Domestic violence hidden behind the concept of "parental alienation" - Research on court practices" was published.

It focuses on complex situations involving child custody and determining the mode of maintaining personal relationships of the child with the non-resident parent in the context of domestic violence, particularly when children resist or refuse contact with one parent and/or allegations arise of the existing or possible “alienation of the child from the parent”.

In Serbia, no studies have yet examined cases where these three dimensions intersect. At the same time, existing studies and analyses on the protection of women and children from domestic violence point to numerous weaknesses, as well as the fact that in professional practice, the **scientifically insufficiently grounded concept of “parental alienation” (or its terminological variations) is increasingly appearing and being promoted.**

The aim of this research was to assess the current state of affairs – professional assessments and decisions made in such cases through the analysis of court rulings, and to identify the characteristics of the phenomenon, professional assessments, and decisions, as well as to map the problems and challenges in practice. [Read HERE.](#)

Shared by Autonomous Women’s Center



ARMENIA: RESEARCH ON LEGAL MECHANISMS AND IMPLEMENTATION METHODS REGARDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN 2025

WAVE member **Women’s Rights House (WRH)**, in collaboration with the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women in Armenia, has conducted a **study** that includes:



- **Legislative gaps and reforms to align with international standards**
- **Clarification of criminal justice mechanisms and enhancement of the effectiveness of violence prevention**
- **Expansion and accessibility of support platforms for survivors of violence**
- **Development of public awareness and educational programs**

The research (in Armenian and English), as well as the recommendations presented, can be accessed [HERE.](#)

Shared by WRH

PUSHING ACTION: CAMPAIGN & PROJECT UPDATES

MOLDOVA: THE ANA FUND'S IMPACT ON EMPOWERING SURVIVORS

The **Ana Fund**, launched by WAVE member National Coalition "Life Without Violence" (**Coaliția Națională "Viața fără Violență în Familie"**), empowers women in Moldova by providing crucial emergency aid and long-term support. Unique and entirely community-funded, over €22,000 was raised in the Fund's first year, supporting 14 women with vital medical, financial, psychological, and legal assistance, including safe shelter and even a home. This work is critical because Moldova's law on victim rehabilitation largely fails in practice. Victims rarely receive mandated financial compensation, and state services often lack resources, making access to aid difficult.

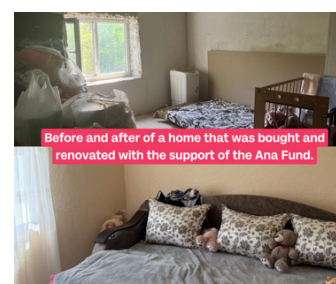


Photo: Ana Fund

Many women do not report violence due to stigma, economic dependence, and a lack of trust in a justice system plagued by ineffective responses. **At the Ana Fund, a feminist approach is adopted, supporting women in reclaiming their freedom and self-trust, while also addressing critical gaps by providing immediate and tangible support where state mechanisms fall short.** More about the Ana Fund [HERE](#).

Shared by National Coalition "Life Without Violence"

ENGLAND: REFUGE'S TECH SAFETY SUMMIT

WAVE member [Refuge](#) is hosting its second **Tech Safety Summit** from 23-24 September 2025, a **groundbreaking virtual conference dedicated to tackling technology-facilitated and economic abuse**. As the UK's largest provider of specialist domestic abuse services and the sector leader in tech abuse, Refuge is at the forefront of driving policy change in this field. Building on the success of last year's inaugural summit, which featured panellists including Ofcom CEO Melanie Dawes, Domestic Abuse Commissioner Dame Nicole Jacobs and Refuge ambassador Sharon Gaffka, **this year's event will bring together experts, policymakers and advocates from fields spanning technology, banking and the criminal justice system**. Tickets for the summit are available [HERE](#). More about the speakers [HERE](#).

Shared by Refuge

SHAPING CHANGE: LEGAL, POLICY & ADVOCACY UPDATES

ARMENIA: REVIEW AT UPR 49TH SESSION

During the [49th Session of the Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#) on 1 May 2025, Armenia received strong calls from over 20 UN Member States to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). **The recommendations emphasised the need to strengthen legal protections for survivors of gender-based violence, improve prosecution of perpetrators, and accelerate long-overdue ratification of the Convention, many urging this to be done without delay or reservations.**

WAVE member Women's Resource Center ([WRC](#)) participated in the UPR Pre-session, advocating for these recommendations as part of its ongoing efforts to ensure state accountability in addressing domestic and gender-based violence. WRC welcomes international support and will continue pushing for ratification and effective implementation.

Shared by WRC

Disclaimer: Please note that the section "International News" contains external information sharing. WAVE cannot take responsibility or be held liable for any of the information contained within. Additionally, the information presented does not necessarily reflect the official policy, opinion, or position of WAVE.



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