

WAVE News

Step Up! Meme Contest Launches on May 5th!

On May 5th, participating WAVE members will launch a Step Up! Meme Contest in their respective countries. The winning memes will become tools in raising awareness for violence against women. The Step Up! Meme Contest is a youth engagement activity that will emphasize that violence has nothing to do with fun. The common theme of these memes will be recovery from gender-based violence.

Experts discuss the importance and utility of the Istanbul Convention in Barcelona



The Unitary Platform against Gender-Based Violence (member organisation of the WAVE network) convened a meeting in Barcelona to raise awareness on this legal instrument among politicians and other relevant stakeholders. Rosa Logar, in her capacity as Vice-president of GREVIO (the group of experts tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention), delivered a presentation underscoring the obligation of the Government of Spain to implement the Istanbul Convention and explained how this could be made

more effective in practice.

Women activists gather in Belgrade to address the problem of femicide



The conference *FEMICIDE - every murder of a woman – responsibility and disgrace of perpetrator, the state and society* (6-7 March 2017, Belgrade) was organised by the Women against Violence Network. Andrada Fillip participated on behalf of the WAVE office and delivered a presentation on actions needed to prevent and eradicate femicide. The sharing of

knowledge and experiences has empowered both organisers and participants, making them stronger in their joint struggle to combat male violence against women. The network is a coalition of specialized women's NGOs which provide individual support to women survivors and work on changing the social norms to decrease violence against women in Serbia. The network has been producing [annual reports on the situation of femicide in Serbia](#) as of 2010.

WAVE goes to the CSW in New York



This year's session of the Commission on the Status of Women (13-24 March 2017) ended with the adoption of the Agreed Conclusions. The priority theme addressed throughout the session was women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. A brief report on the discussions which have taken place and the various side events and parallel events organised by UN

Member States and NGOs is available [here](#). WAVE welcomes the adoption of the [Agreed Conclusions](#) which address the phenomenon of violence against women in a holistic manner and is particularly pleased to see that the Commission urges Governments to “*develop and apply gender-sensitive measures for the protection from, prevention and punishment of all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spaces, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, trafficking in persons and femicide, among others*”.

International News

The UK is speeding up the process to ratify the Istanbul Convention

The Private Members’ Bill on the Istanbul Convention in the UK has now progressed through Parliament, and is now awaiting Royal Assent – which means it will be shortly be made into law. This will set a formal timetable in which the UK Government has to ratify the Convention, meaning that campaigners in the UK can hold the next Government accountable for ratification.

Women’s Aid Federation England published its Annual Survey 2016 in March <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/research-and-publications/annual-survey-2016/>

This latest Women’s Aid Annual Survey clearly shows both why recent injections of government funding have been essential, and why without greater accountability for local commissioning decisions, and a sustainable new system of refuge funding, they can never be enough. The pressures on women and children seeking support to escape or recover from domestic abuse, and on the services that support them, are rising to intolerable levels. This year’s survey tells a story about austerity and the impact of overall spending cuts. But that is not the only story, and it’s important to resist a defeatist response to these statistics. Issues about the way in which limited funding is allocated are at least as important.

New legislation on domestic violence and abuse developed in the UK

Preparing for a Domestic Violence and Abuse Act. The UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, announced in February that she is going to oversee the development of new legislation to create a step-change in the response to domestic violence. At the moment it is not totally clear what this legislation is likely to include but it is likely to focus on protection orders, the police and statutory agencies response to domestic abuse and support for children.

The need for accession of the European Union to the Istanbul Convention

On the 31st of March 2017 the Working Party on Fundamental Rights, Citizens’ Rights and Free Movement of Persons (FREMP Committee) of the Council of the European Union held its monthly meeting. One of the topics on the agenda concerned the European Union’s accession to the Istanbul Convention. As part of the work undertaken with the [European Coalition to end violence against women and girls](#), as well as being one of the activities and aims of the Step Up! Campaign, WAVE is calling on EU Member States to accelerate the negotiations in the Council and make certain that the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention is ensured within a broader scope of competence. The WAVE Network together with the Coalition fully

[supports the accession of the EU](#) with a broad scope of competence, as this can ensure the full protection of women's rights, broad application as well as proper implementation of the Convention. WAVE Members from countries such as Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Romania or the United Kingdom have stepped up together and called on their Permanent Representations to the EU in Brussels to 'listen to the demands of women's and civil society organisations and proactively support the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention with the broadest scope of EU competence as possible'.

GUIDELINES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE PROVIDERS

The Women's Support Centre from Armenia developed these guidelines in 2016. Professionals in Armenia have compiled the manual in an effort to empower and support agencies that work with victims of domestic violence to better serve their clients. It is intended as a guideline for quality improvement of practices and services offered to victims of violence.

http://www.womensupportcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/WSC_Manual_ENG_082316.pdf

Protest in Armenia to respect the rights of women and children affected by domestic violence

The Women's Support Center (WSC) NGO, a full-service domestic violence center based in Yerevan, Armenia and also a member of the WAVE network, in tandem with the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, brought attention to the Ministry of Justice Compulsory Enforcement Service's mismanagement of child custody cases in Armenia. Protesting in front of government buildings and publishing articles in the media, they shed light on the illegal practice of perpetrators of domestic violence taking guardianship of children, especially sons, and the Court not following through with their obligations even after custody was awarded to survivors. Importantly, survivors themselves spoke out at the protests and demanded their rights. As a direct result of these public actions, three women, including two WSC beneficiaries, have been reunited with their children and have begun the process of rebuilding their families. Moreover, by drawing attention to the ineptitude of State bodies, NGOs working in the field have been able to address other cases that now have a greater chance for a successful outcome.

New legal provision that empowers survivors was adopted in Germany

In February, the German Bundestag decided to change social law 294b, which means that doctors no longer have to report injuries sustained by adult patients to health insurance agencies in cases of sexual or other forms of violence. This recent change bears huge importance to the self-determination and safety of survivors of violence in terms of information. The news has been welcomed by many women's organizations across Germany, as many feminists have been campaigning in support of this legal amendment. More (in German): https://dejure.org/gesetze/SGB_V/294a.html; http://www.signal-intervention.de/index.php?np=3_4_0_0

TAIEX regional workshop on combating violence against women and empowering equality bodies

The [workshop](#) took place during the 6 and 7 of April 2017 in Tbilisi, Georgia. On the first day of the conference, the focus was on the initiatives of the European Commission to combat violence against women in the EU and the introduction of the Istanbul Convention. During the second part of the day, representatives from Belgium, Portugal and Croatia provided insights into their good practices to combat violence against women (VAW) and domestic violence (DV). The representative from Croatia introduced the work of the Gender-Equality Ombudsperson and spoke about gender-equality and DV legislation in Croatia. On the second day, representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine gave presentations on VAW and DV data and measures concerning prevention and protection. WAVE held two workshops on multi-agency partnerships. It was made clear throughout the discussions that there are some models of multi-agency work in most countries. However, there is still a lack of specialized services for women victims of DV. In terms of cooperation, there is usually some kind of cooperation between the police, social departments and courts (in some countries more formalized in others more ad-hoc) but there is a need to bring victims' perspectives and their needs at the centre of interventions and to strengthen cooperation with specialized services.

16 trainings supported by local government in Georgia

Fund "Sukhumi" (member of the WAVE network), an NGO from Georgia, has been actively cooperating with the local self-government of the Senak Municipality for more than 10 years. As a result of this cooperation, two years ago the Youth Department was renamed the Youth and Gender Department. At the initiative of this department and with the support of the local self-government, trainers from Fund "Sukhumi" periodically conduct trainings on gender issues. Throughout March-April 2017 in Senaki, a small city of Western Georgia, one more round of 16 trainings on gender-based- violence was conducted. The number of participants to the training amounted to roughly 320 people, including employees of kindergartens and cultural institutions, representatives of local authorities and youth. The trainings demonstrated that this kind of work with relevant stakeholders is effective, as it has a positive impact on the destruction of gender stereotypes.