

WAVE Newsletter, May-June 2017

The EU signed the Istanbul Convention!



On June 13th 2017 the European Union signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). The decision to join the Istanbul Convention confirms EU's commitment to combat violence against women within its territory as well as globally, and strengthen existing legal frameworks and its capacity to act. All EU member states have already signed the Convention, while 14 have also ratified it. Having the EU joining the Convention "will ensure complementarity between the national and EU level and will consolidate the capacity for the EU to play a more effective role in international fora such as the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)".

WAVE co-organised a side event on femicide at the 26th session of the CCPCJ



The panel "Collection of Data on Gender-Related Killings of Women and Girls – Promising Practices" was organized by WAVE together with ACUNS, UNODC, the Office of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, the OSCE and other stakeholders, on the occasion of the 26th session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ). The side-event underscored the necessity to go beyond available data on femicide and violence against women, and stressed the need to establish femicide watches or observatories. Three members of the WAVE network, Women's Aid Ireland, the Women's Support Centre from Armenia (on behalf of the Coalition to Stop Violence against Women) and feminicidio.net (part of the Otro Tiempo Association) presented methodologies for collecting data on femicide, that have been developed and applied in their respective countries. Further information about this is available in a [press release](#).

Serbia declared May 18th the Remembrance Day for Murdered Women Victims of Violence



The declaration arrived only ten days after Women against Violence Network submitted 8.000 signatures to the Vice-President of the Government of Serbia and to the president of the Coordinating Body for Gender Equality, Zorana Mihajlovic. The petition was supported by members of political institutions, unions, families of victims of femicide and by women from 25 cities and municipalities with the assistance of 32 civil society organizations. The Network asked for the establishment of a Supervising Committee for monitoring femicide at the national level, with the aim of gathering, analyzing and checking data, as well as defining measures towards preventing femicide. Each femicide needs to be thoroughly analyzed in order to identify omissions in protection, towards improving and developing measures of prevention. Further information is available in the Network's [press release](#).

German parliament passes law banning child marriage

On June 1st 2017 the German parliament passed a law ending child marriage, officially raising the marriageable age to 18. The previous law allowed children of 16 and 17 to marry adults in certain cases. The law also nullifies existing marriages in which at least one spouse was under the age of 16 at the time of the wedding, except when the now adult spouse confirms the intention of remaining married. The record number of more than one million refugees who arrived in Germany over the past two years "raised concerns of child marriages amid reports of hundreds of children arriving as refugees in Germany, already married to adults". On June 20th the New York Governor also signed an anti-child marriage law, one of the first in the USA to take such an important step towards ending child marriage.



June 20th was World Refugee Day!

World Refugee Day, observed on June 20th each year, is dedicated to raising awareness on the situation of refugees throughout the world. As pointed out by UN Women, "half of the 19.6 million refugees worldwide are women, with specific needs and vulnerabilities that are rarely at the forefront of humanitarian action." They are exposed to violence not only in their country of origin but throughout their displacement experience: during the journey, in detention or reception centres, and in the host countries because of the changing family



relationships, lack of basic services and healthcare assistance, economic dependency, and limited access to employment. As part of the [Step Up! Campaign](#), WAVE and PICUM have launched a [pledge](#) to push European countries towards improving access to services for undocumented women survivors of violence.

Hungary passes law tightening regulations on foreign-funded NGOs

On June 13th 2017 the [Hungarian parliament approved](#) the 'Law on the Transparency of Organisations Receiving Foreign Funds' that requires NGOs receiving more than €24,000 in direct or indirect funding from abroad to register as "civic organisations funded from abroad". NGOs who fail to comply with this new regulation risk closure. Officially justified as a way to improve transparency and fighting money laundering and terrorism funding, for civil society organisations this move is a crackdown on independent voices and an attempt to stigmatize the organisations. The [Istanbul Convention](#), which Hungary signed in March 2014, clearly defines the responsibility of the state to fully address violence against women in all its forms. As Hungary currently provides very limited government funding for NGOs and shelters protecting women from violence, these organisations rely on funding from abroad to continue their life-saving work. The attempt to obstruct NGOs in receiving foreign donations, is therefore a clear violation of the Istanbul Convention. [WAVE expresses strong solidarity](#) with its Hungarian sisters.



Respect's Young People's Services Event to take place on 19th September 2017



[Respect](#), a UK membership organization dedicated to work with domestic violence perpetrators, male victims and young people, is organizing the Young People Service Event (YPS) which will take place on September 19th at Shoreditch, London. The event focuses on pioneering work with young people who use violence, abuse and challenging behaviour. YPS Event's main aim is to bring together experts, practitioners, parents and commissioners working

to respond to young people who are often vulnerable and pose risk to others in an informal, participative event. Attendance fee is £120 for members and £156 for non-members (VAT included). Places can be reserved by completing the [online booking form](#). More information can be found on [Respect's website](#).

Joint statement on the condition of administrative detention of migrants

WAVE joined other 52 organisations in expressing a collective concern regarding the human rights of migrants impacted by immigration detention, a particularly worrying trend among European States. The [Joint Statement](#), released on June 22nd and addressed to the [European Committee on Legal Co-Operation of the Council of Europe](#), welcomes the increased attention of the Council of Europe concerning this issue, "including the current draft process to develop European Rules on the Conditions for the Administrative Detention of Migrants". Nevertheless, it stresses the need for a fundamentally different approach in order for the draft codifying instrument, which still contains some concerning links to existing criminal detention standards, to truly reflect the minimum human rights standards to which migrants are entitled. "The codification of European Rules on the Conditions for the Administrative Detention of Migrants can play an important role in reinforcing these fundamental norms, but only if they truly and properly distinguish immigration detention from criminal and other administrative detention regimes."

Call for submission on online violence against women!

The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Ms. Dubravka Šimonović indicated, in her [vision-setting report](#) to the Human Rights Council, the need to examine the recent phenomenon



of online violence against women, and "the applicability of national laws to it, and to make recommendations for States and non-State actors to fight online violence against women and girls while respecting freedom of expression and the prohibition of incitement to violence and hatred". To this aim, the Special Rapporteur seeks to collect existing good practices on laws regulating violence against women and sexual harassment on-line. Different stakeholders, including Member States, National Human Rights Institutions, NGOs, as well as members of academia, are invited to offer inputs and views. All submissions should be sent electronically by **30 September 2017** to vaw@ohchr.org. Further information and

details are available at this [link](#).

Every woman has the right to be safe online

The lines between our online and offline lives, activities and social networks become increasingly blurred: social media, use of smartphones, tablets and other devices have become a big part of the daily lives of many of us.

Unfortunately, misuse of technology has also become a major issue for women that experience different forms of violence. All too often the abuse is also perpetrated or continued online or by using technology such as Spyware. In the Netherlands four shelter organizations (Arosa, Blijf Groep, Moviera en Perspektief Wende) have joined forces to create a project on the misuse of technology as a form of violence against women: safetyNed. The project is based on and partners with the American Safety Net that the National Network to End Domestic Violence has successfully developed since 2000. First and foremost, safetyNed is there to support victims that suffer from forms of misuse of technology. A new website was launched on the 22nd of June and an expert Tech Team has been trained by our NNEDV Safety Net colleagues to train police staff, and also advise survivors and their advocates.

New shelter for victims of domestic violence opened in Cyprus



The Association for Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO) together with the Norway Grants, OPAP Cyprus, IKEA and the Government of Cyprus have managed to finalize the construction of the first purpose-built shelter in Cyprus for victims of domestic violence which is aiming at the reduction of gender-based and domestic violence. The shelter offers increased and improved standards for accommodation, security and other supporting services to people who experience physical and psychological abuse and who are in danger from their immediate family environment. It also houses the 24/7 Association's National Helpline for Domestic Violence 1440 which has been actively supporting victims since 1988.

Self-defence is not self-defence

Organisations referenced on the WAVE website may have received a promotional e-mail from an organisation called Crobran Self Defense at the end of May. The WAVE office would like to dissociate itself from this mailing. The proposed self-defence classes are clearly a for-profit enterprise and most probably do not adhere to WAVE's feminist values. If you need information on feminist self-defence, please contact our Belgian focal point Garance.

New Domestic Violence & Abuse Bill for England and Wales

On the 21st June 2017 the Conservative Government, who won a slim majority in the recent General Election in the UK, announced that a new **Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill** will be developed and enter into law within the next two years. The key elements of the Bill will be to create a new clear definition of domestic violence and abuse law, consolidate current domestic abuse prevention and protection measures in the criminal and family justice systems, and ensure sentences for perpetrators really reflect the life-long impacts and harms that domestic abuse has upon children. Finally, the **Bill** will establish a new Domestic Violence and Abuse Commissioner, to represent victims and survivors, and monitor and assess the response by public services and the criminal justice system. Women's Aid has been calling for a new Commissioner, to hold agencies accountable for action on domestic abuse and end the existing postcode lottery of services that women experiencing domestic abuse currently receive. The Bill will apply in England and Wales.

Multi-Sectoral Collaboration Practices developed by the Women's Law Centre (Moldova) were presented at a High Level Regional Forum



The Women's Law Centre practices of multi-sectoral collaboration were presented at the Regional Conference entitled 'Making laws work to end violence against women and girls', organised by the Romanian Chamber of Deputies during 12-14 June 2017. Moldova made significant advances in this field by introducing the Emergency Restraining Order (ERO) as a method of domestic violence prevention, which was particularly appreciated at the event. This positive result was achieved thanks to the collaboration between the Women's Law Centre and the General Police Inspectorate, which started in 2012, when a number of training sessions were provided to police officers. After an interactive dialogue, several system shortcomings were identified, which were eliminated once the ERO entered into force, in March 2017. Today it is possible to speak of significant changes. Within a three-month period 490 EROs were issued. This means that the safety of women subjected to domestic violence is increased, and they are assisted by qualified police officers.

The WHOSEVA Project -Supporting Elderly Female Victims of Abuse- is launched!

WHOSEFVA is a two-year project (2017-2019) co-funded by the European Commission, aiming at addressing the barriers and gaps which exist in healthcare settings to effectively support elderly women victims of abuse. The

project's main objective is to increase the capacity of domestic violence organizations to better represent the interests and voices of older women who are victims of abuse in healthcare and healthcare policy, thus helping to better comply with the desires of the EU. The WHSOEFVA project will be implemented in the following six [partner countries](#): Austria, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Latvia and the UK. The coordination of the project is conducted by Women's Support and Information Centre in Estonia, with guidance and input from Finnish expert on elder abuse, Sirkka Perttu. For more information, please visit the [project's website](#) or have a look at our [press release](#).

The RESPONSE project -Multi-Agency Response to GBV in Healthcare- has now started!

The [RESPONSE project](#) (2017-2019), co-funded by the European Commission, aims at providing capacity building in order to increase disclosure in patients and referral to specialised services for survivors of gender-based violence in women's health services, using a rights-based, gender-sensitive and survivor-centred approach informed by robust research evidence. The project will be implemented in [five EU countries](#): Austria, Germany, France, Romania and Spain, with the support of the UK for evaluation. The coordination of the project is conducted by Babes-Bolyai University (UBB) Department of Public Health in Romania, with the support of gender violence researchers and policy experts at the University of Bristol, UK. Want to know more? Please visit the [project's website](#) or look at our [press release](#)!

Georgia ratifies the Istanbul Convention

On May 4th 2017, Georgia's Parliament ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. A package of amendments to 24 laws accompanying the Convention was adopted unanimously. The following amendments will be incorporated into the existing legal framework: measures on elimination of domestic violence, protection and assistance to victims of domestic violence will be legally regulated. These will also be applied in cases of violence against women. The package of changes was developed by the Ministry of Justice. Non-governmental organizations were involved in consultations on how to enhance their effectiveness. Georgia is now the 23rd state to ratify the Convention.

New shelter for victims of violence opens in Georgia

Given its successful work in the field of domestic violence, the Anti-Violence Network of Georgia (AVNG) was allocated a building by the Ministry of Economics and Sustainable Development on April 13th 2016. The building was entrusted to AGNG for 15 years in order to establish a shelter/crisis centre for victims of violence. The building was renovated and equipped with the support of the Embassies of Poland, Japan, Estonia, the International Women's Association and the Sigrid Rausing Trust. It was officially opened on May 30th, 2017. The AVNG shelter/crisis centre for victims of violence, mothers and children can accommodate up to 20 persons. Service beneficiaries have an opportunity to receive legal aid and psycho-social rehabilitation.

GREVIO holds its 11th meeting in Strasbourg, 26 - 29 June 2017



During this meeting, among other issues, GREVIO adopted its first (baseline) evaluation reports on Austria and Monaco and discussed its draft (baseline) evaluation reports on Albania and Denmark.