

Romania's Statement in the Working Session 5

Romania fully subscribes to the Statement delivered by Finland on behalf of the European Union, but we would like to make just a few remarks in our national capacity. We would like to reaffirm our firm commitment to continue to implement the OSCE commitments in the field of gender equality and empowerment of women.

In this context, we would like to point out some accomplishments in achieving gender equality:

- the adoption of an appropriate legislative framework with a view to ensure gender equality, gender mainstreaming, protection and support for the victims of domestic violence and violence against women, the development of integrated services regarding the prevention and the elimination of domestic violence;
- the adopting and implementation of subsequent National Strategies for gender equality during 2006-2009, 2010-2012 and 2013-2017;
- the creation of appropriate institutional mechanisms, including the establishment of the specialized Department for this matter in 2014, that addresses both the issue of equal opportunity and domestic violence.

We consider gender-based violence and domestic violence as one of the worst forms of violation of human rights and of the rights to dignity and security. We consider this social phenomenon as intolerable and humiliating, having huge and often countless consequences not only for individuals, but also at the social and economic level.

The National Strategy for preventing and combating domestic violence for the period 2013-2017 ensures the premises for the reduction of the level of tolerance with respect to the phenomenon of violence, as well as the increase of the effectiveness of the prevention programmes through systematic implementation of measures that prevent, control and protect the victims of violence. The main operational objectives of the National Strategy are: preventing and reducing domestic violence; protecting victims of domestic violence and punishing the perpetrators, by establishing an institutional integrated framework; promoting cross-sectorial cooperation for the elimination of domestic violence and the support of the partnership with the civil society; monitoring the specialized domestic violence cases brought before the competent institutions and the concrete responsibilities incumbent upon every institution or authority involved in preventing and combating domestic violence.

In Romania, shelters and safe houses are concentrated in urban areas, and we are addressing now the need for care for victims of violence in rural areas as well. At this moment, Romania provides specialized services of free legal advice and legal representation for women who are victims of violence, thus removing the economic factor as an impediment to prosecution of punishment of this type of violence.

We will provide a helpline, as well as training for experts in gender equality, which is a new profession in Romania, and support for statutory agencies (primarily the police and local authorities) through an EU-funded project - *START, A quality life in safety*.

Thank you.