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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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Abstract: This paper proposes an integrated and multidisciplinary analysis of the mechanisms of protection of women against acts of domestic violence. The approach is aligned with European and national standards in the field of civil rights, focusing on the correlation of specific legislation with the instruments of assistance and reintegration of victims. According to the special internal normative framework established by Law no.217/2003, this phenomenon includes any form of active or passive aggression manifested within the family perimeter or between current or former partners, regardless of the existence of a common home.
The synthesis focuses in particular on abuses directed against women in the family context, an area in which the Romanian legislator has established the well-being and mutual aid of the family as a priority of national interest. Externally, the central pillar of this protection is the Istanbul Convention (2011), ratified by Romania in 2016, which criminalizes gender-based violence. Domestically, this protection is also reflected in the criminal law norms; the crime of domestic violence includes, among others, domestic violence being criminalized in the provisions of art. 199 of the Criminal Code.
From a methodological point of view, the study is based on the analysis and interpretation of European and national law sources, as well as on the study of the casuistry in the records of the competent public authorities, without resorting to the collection of primary empirical data. Female victims of violence benefit from extensive legal recognition; in this regard, it is the task of states to develop government strategies for the implementation of protection and social reintegration measures.

Keywords: aggressiveness, discrimination, criminalization, protection, victims

Résumé : Cet article propose une analyse intégrée et multidisciplinaire des mécanismes de protection des femmes contre les actes de violence domestique. Cette approche est alignée sur les normes européennes et nationales dans le domaine des droits civils, en se concentrant sur la corrélation de la législation spécifique avec les instruments d'assistance et de réintégration des victimes. Selon le cadre normatif interne spécial établi par la loi n° 217/2003, ce phénomène inclut toute forme d'agressivité active ou passive manifestée au sein du périmètre familial ou entre partenaires actuels ou anciens, indépendamment de l'existence d'un foyer commun.
La synthèse se concentre en particulier sur les abus dirigés contre les femmes dans le contexte familial, domaine dans lequel le législateur roumain a établi le bien-être et

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l'entraide de la famille comme une priorité d'intérêt national. À l'extérieur, le pilier central de cette protection est la Convention d'Istanbul (2011), ratifiée par la Roumanie en 2016, qui criminalise la violence basée sur le genre. Au niveau national, cette protection se reflète également dans les normes de droit pénal: le crime de violence domestique inclut, entre autres, la criminalisation de la violence domestique dans les dispositions de l'article 199 du Code pénal.
D'un point de vue méthodologique, l'étude repose sur l'analyse et l'interprétation des sources de droit européen et national, ainsi que sur l'étude de la casuistique dans les archives des autorités publiques compétentes, sans recourir à la collecte de données empiriques primaires. Les victimes féminines de violences bénéficient d'une reconnaissance juridique étendue; à cet égard, il revient aux États d'élaborer des stratégies gouvernementales pour la mise en œuvre des mesures de protection et de réinsertion sociale.

Mots-clés : agressivité, discrimination, criminalisation, protection, victimes

Abstract: Lucrarea de față propune o analiză integrată și pluridisciplinară privind mecanismele de protecție ale femeilor împotriva actelor de violență din familie. Demersul este aliniat la standardele europene și naționale în materia drepturilor civile, axându-se pe corelarea legislației specifice cu instrumentele de asistență și reintegrare a victimelor. Potrivit cadrului normativ special intern stabilit prin Legea nr.217/2003, acest fenomen include orice formă de agresiune activă sau pasivă manifestată în perimetrul familial sau între actuali ori foști parteneri, independent de existența unei locuințe comune.
Sinteza vizează în mod particular abuzurile îndreptate împotriva femeilor în context familial, un domeniu în care legiuitorul român a instituit bunăstarea și întrajutorarea familiei ca prioritate de interes național. Pe plan extern, pilonul central al acestei protecții îl constituie Convenția de la Istanbul (2011), ratificată de România în 2016, care incriminează manifestările violente bazate pe gen. În plan intern, această protecție este reflectată și în normele de drept penal; infracțiunea de violență în familie include, printre altele, și violența domestică, fiind incriminată în prevederile art. 199 din Codul penal.
Din punct de vedere metodologic, studiul se fundamentează pe analiza și interpretarea izvoarelor de drept europene și naționale, precum și pe studierea cazuisticii din evidențele autorităților publice competente, fără a apela la colectarea de date empirice primare. Victimele feminine ale violenţei beneficiază de o recunoaştere juridică extinsă; în acest sens, statelor le revine sarcina elaborării strategiilor guvernamentale de implementare a măsurilor de protecție și reintegrare socială.

Cuvinte-cheie: agresivitate, discriminare, incriminare, protecție, victime

Introduction

In Romania, according to the report of the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (ANES), in 2023, out of the total of 13,000 situations of domestic violence that came to the attention of the institutions, 9,000 cases involved victims of gender-based violence. Although the figures seem small compared to the adult population in Romania, domestic violence remains, through the profile of the aggressor, of the victim and the risk factors that followed, one of the most hidden and tolerated by the *victim* phenomenon. However, an increase in

reported cases of domestic violence can be observed compared to previous years. Also, taking into account the fact that the situations reported to police officers are in the order of hundreds of thousands, respectively 132,50 cases during 2024 and 138,000 cases in 2025, only about 10% of victims choose to break away from the relationship and request support from state institutions. Why? We are trying to find an answer in this article.

This research aims to be a synthesis in a multidisciplinary approach to the protection of women against violence from the perspective of European and internal rights, being at the same time a point of view and an analysis of both women's rights and the legal instruments made available to victims.

The protection and support of the family, the development and strengthening of family solidarity, based on friendship, affection and moral and material mutual help of family members, is an ***objective of national interest****, and the prevention and combating of domestic violence are part of the integrated policy of protection and support of the family and represent a* As an important public health problem, through this clarification of Law 217/2003, the state declares the protection of the family, women and victims within the family to be of crucial importance in protecting human rights, development and education of future generations.

1. Explanatory theoretical models of violence against women

In the literature, aggression towards women can be explained by cyclicity theory, developed by psychologist Walker over several years. According to the author, aggression is not an isolated phenomenon but manifests itself through a repetitive pattern that includes three phases, namely: the accumulation of tension, the violence itself, and reconciliation or the honeymoon. Walker extracts some defining elements: the helplessness learned and acquired by the woman who is a victim of the violence of her partner leads to the justification of his behavior by the victim, even to his defense against the members of the extended family or friends; the victim learns with aggressive behavior by coming to believe that this is normality; the aggressor will take advantage of the position of authority and power to bully; the victim will try by any means to please the aggressor in question, he will appreciate any gesture of forgiveness, or tenderness made by him; the social isolation of the victim is inevitable so that the aggressor becomes the center of his universe; inoculating the idea that the victim is the cause of the aggressive behavior, who is guilty of violence, an idea that the victim usually also appropriates; In the situation where the victim chooses to leave, the aggressor promises change, couple therapy, anger management, so the victim chooses to return, at which point the cyclicity resumes (Walker, 1977).

The „cyclicality of violence" becomes in itself a factor that prevents the victim from totally breaking the connection with the aggressor, giving him the chance to return to blunt behavior towards him. These stages allow the state of violence to be maintained and the victim to be kept in a state of dependence, since especially the reconciliation phase diminishes the perception of the seriousness of

the aggression and creates the illusion of change. From a human rights perspective, clarifying this dynamic is essential in order to be able to identify the signs and criteria of situations of violence and to develop adequate protection mechanisms for victims (Bonea, 2009; Halket et al., 2014).

Another theoretical framework that allows the explanation of the phenomenon and aggressiveness is the frustration-aggressiveness theory, whereby frustration is the precursor of aggression, and aggression always succeeds frustration (Dollard et al., 2013).

Other theoretical models include Bandura's theory of social learning as well as feminist theory through which aggression is explained through the prism of gender inequalities, discrimination, and existing power relations in society, being associated with authors such as Dobash and Dobash (2003).

According to this theory, violence against women reflects patriarchal social structures that legitimize or tolerate the domination of men over women, violence not being the result only of individual problems. In patriarchal societies where status roles are markedly traditional, men may have access to socialization through which they are taught to exercise and maintain authority and control in the family. From this point of view, aggression in the family and in intimate relationships is seen as an expression of control and domination, and violence against women is seen as a social and rights problem, not just as an intimate manifestation of conflict between partners. Feminist theory emphasizes that gender stereotypes, cultural norms, traditionalism, and society's tolerance of abusive behaviors create the premises for the perpetuation of violence against women. Also, in the context of the analysis of violence against women, this theory highlights the need for institutional and social changes to protect women's rights along with the development and adaptation of legislation (Bonea, 2020).

The analysis of violence against women through different models and theoretical prisms highlights the complexity of this social phenomenon. Theories such as the cyclical theory of aggression, the theory of frustration, or feminist theory provide explanatory frameworks for understanding the mechanisms underlying aggressive behaviors within the family. The approach is different depending on the emphasis placed on individual, emotional, or social factors, through the influence of power relations and cultural norms through the prism of existing social structures.

From the human rights approach, violence against women must be seen as a marked violation of fundamental rights, not as a private situation, determining adequate and proportionate responses from state institutions, and in order to develop viable and real prevention and support policies, it is necessary to understand the mechanisms of triggering, perpetuation, and vulnerabilities of the victim.

2. Objectives of the analysis and interpretation of legal documents

Through this synthesis, we want to point out and analyze the normative acts based on which the woman victim of violence is ensured the respect of the fundamental human rights, namely the right to life, physical and mental integrity, freedom of expression, dignity, protection of privacy, etc., as well as the instruments through which the victim can access support and protection services when she chooses to leave the aggressor's area of influence. We also want to see what could be improved so that the protection of the victim is complete and effective.

3. Legislative framework

From a legal point of view, we can delimit normative acts into *international norms*, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the Istanbul Convention, signed in 2011, ratified by Romania in 2016, Directive (EU) 2024/1385, and *internal rules*, among which we refer to Law 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence, Law 26/2024 extending the application of protection measures beyond domestic violence, Law 211/2004 on some measures for the protection of victims of crime, Law 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, Criminal Code, Government Decision 49/2011 on prevention and intervention in multidisciplinary teams and in network in situations of violence against children and domestic violence, Government Decision no. 1547/2022 for the approval of the National Strategy on promoting equal opportunities and treatment between women and men and preventing and combating domestic violence for the period 2022-2027.

4. Forms of violence against women (domestic or outside the family)

The forms of violence recognized and incriminated by the legislator are physical, psychological, verbal, social, economic, cybernetic, sexual, spiritual violence, specifying at the same time *that no one can avail himself of custom, culture, religion, tradition and honor to justify any type of acts of violence*, thus being subject to the incidence of the law and traditions, culture, not being admitted as a means of justification.

Risk factors include lack of trust in authorities, traditions, addictions, poverty, lack of education, economic and psychological dependence, subsequent practical aspects, and minor children. We specify that, unlike other crimes criminalized in the normative acts, when we talk about women victims of violence, the real figure is much higher than the declared one, the main factors causing the

lack of reaction of the victims being economic and psychological dependence on the aggressor, lack of information on gender equality, customs, and minor children.

The legislation applicable to victims of domestic violence and violence against women has some peculiarities, with positive legislative changes being made in recent years.

5. Legal and social protection instruments: from international rights to national reality

To be effective, the fight against gender-based violence must be based on the existence and application of a complete set of legal instruments, which transform the theoretical principles of fundamental rights of humanity into sanctionable state obligations. These instruments do not work in isolation but make up a pyramidal system of protection starting from the universal standards of the United Nations, passing through the rigor of the Council of Europe and culminating in the domestic legislation that provides the means of immediate intervention (World Health Organization, 2021).

In this article, we address protection instruments as mechanisms that have the role of ensuring what international jurisprudence calls due diligence. This phrase defines the role of the state not only in terms of the negative obligation not to aggress, but especially through the positive correlative obligation to organize a social system capable of preventing violence, protecting victims, and punishing aggressors. In what follows, we will analyze these protection mechanisms.

In order to fulfill the three levels- prevention, protection, or holding the aggressor accountable- the police have the right to enter *a* space, home, or place without agreement if the notification indicates that there is a place where the acts of violence are exercised. On this occasion, following the preparation of the Risk Form, the police can issue the Provisional Protection Order (OPP) with a duration of 120 hours, which aims to immediately secure the victim, establishing several obligations on the aggressor: the aggressor can be evicted from the house, with the possibility of hosting in the reception centers in an emergency regime, wearing the electronic device, prohibition of communication with the victim;

An important legislative amendment brought by Law 26/2024 aims to grant the possibility to police officers to issue OPP`s taking into account their own perceptions on the spot, and any means of evidence in the administration of evidence, including messages or online posts, is also accepted. In the event that, following the completion of the Risk Sheet, the criteria for issuing an OPP are not met, the criminal investigation officers have the obligation to inform the victim about the possibility of addressing the court for the issuance of a protection order.

In 2023, the duration of the court's order of the Protection Order (PO) was changed from a maximum of six months to a maximum of one year, with the possibility of voluntary or involuntary hospitalization of the aggressor in question with the obligation to fulfill and comply with certain measures and obligations incumbent on the aggressor, electronic monitoring device, prohibition of

communication with the victim, obligation to counseling and psychotherapy, forcing hospitalization for the treatment of addictions.

In addition to the intervention of the judicial system to secure victims on the legal dimension, social assistance systems intervene with a series of complementary actions to ensure the effective realization of women's rights, namely hosting the victim in protected centers with secret identity within social assistance, alone or with children, assessing her needs, ensuring access to medical services in case of need, counseling on the practical and subsequent aspects of the act. As a novelty, a normative act, Law 232/2025, was adopted at the end of 2025 by which victims of domestic violence are exempt from stamp duties in divorce proceedings, this being a real support for victims because they generally did not have the financial resources to be able to detach themselves from the aggressor, being forced to take legal action in case of filing, to bear the court fees common to these trials.

The judicial system, as it was conceived in the case of situations of gender-based violence, provides for celerity through very short deadlines for confirmation of the OPP and OP, respectively; the evidence that involves prolonged administration being rejected, because the application of protection measures for victims would be delayed.

According to Law 211/2004, survivors of violence have the right to privacy protection, through anonymization, on the portal and in courts, in order to avoid social exposure and stigmatization; this protection mechanism addresses one of the biggest barriers in reporting violence: fear of the „mouth of the world" and social stigmatization. Through this, the state recognizes the continuity of the victim's vulnerability even after leaving the aggressive environment, within the criminal process, which very often has the purpose of withdrawing the victim's prior complaint, and this results from the very small number of criminal trials resulting in convictions compared to the number of notifications received by the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police.

Anonymization on the portal works as a barrier against secondary victimization having a dual role, on the one hand it prevents the exposure of personal feelings in the public space, giving the victim the feeling of control and security of their own experience, and on the other hand it combats stigmatization, in a social system with tendencies to blame the victim, this anonymization gives survivors the opportunity to rebuild their lives without being labeled as victims. The social worker informs the victim about the act of justice in confidential conditions; this can be one of the determining factors in the decision to leave the relationship, and by guaranteeing anonymity, the law tries to break the victim's state of captivity. Captivity refers to both psychological and social captivity through stigmatization. The moment a woman knows that her identity is protected, the psychological barrier of shame decreases, facilitating the transition from victim to survivor.

The effectiveness of victim protection is achieved by a package of integrated services that aims to facilitate the transition from vulnerability to

autonomy. Thus, the legal norms guarantee access to medical services, primary counseling, legal counseling, psychological counseling, rehabilitation and reintegration, financial compensation, and free legal aid, essential aspects in social reintegration (Nastas, 2023).

The central issue of human rights protection involves the right to free legal aid and the state's obligation to fulfil this right, which removes financial barriers to access to justice. The normative framework also provides for the right to financial compensation, thus recognizing the moral and/or material damage suffered. From a procedural point of view, although the criminal prosecution is conditional on the complaint of the victim, who has the freedom to decide on the criminal action, having the right to drop the complaint or to become a civil party in the criminal proceedings, the legislative system is theoretically designed to provide support throughout the criminal process, avoiding abandonment due to limited resources or pressures.

An important progress in the prevention of revictimization and the right to integrity, in the criminal legislation, with a direct impact on the psycho-emotional balance of the survivors, is represented by the status of victim with specific protection needs, provided by Article 113 of the Criminal Procedure Code. According to this article, when the criteria regarding the status of victim with specific protection needs are met, i.e., the risks of intimidation or vulnerability of the victim are increased, the judicial bodies have the obligation to apply special hearing measures. These measures include hearing in separate rooms from the aggressor, using voice and image distortion techniques, and hearing by videoconference. From the perspective of social work, these means of protection are essential, transforming the hearing into a safe space that encourages victims to testify without being pressured by the presence of the aggressor. Thus, the normative framework protects, in addition to the quality of the evidentiary act, the psychological integrity of the injured person.

A special and extremely vulnerable category concerns victims of domestic violence with extensions in the sphere of human trafficking, is happened when violence takes serious forms, and the victims are also trafficked. Thus, violence in the private sphere becomes a precursor or a component of human trafficking. These extremely complex situations are regulated by the provisions of Law 678/2001 on preventing and combating trafficking in persons, which are corroborated and intertwined with the legislation on gender violence. The particularities of the intervention highlight the need for increased protection, materialized by specific measures and instruments. Thus, the legislator recognizes the increased vulnerability of the victim, granting the 90-day reflection period, the period granted to the victim to recover and decide of his own volition in a secure environment whether he chooses to cooperate with the judicial bodies. From the perspective of social assistance and the role of the social worker in empowering the victim, this is the moment to initiate psycho-emotional reconstruction (Simon, 2008).

Another means of protection concerns identity and protected housing, so that victims can be provided with accommodation in protected housing, „shelters", with unknown location, in order to prevent possible reprisals from aggressors or organized criminal groups, as well as, through the National Office for the Protection of Witnesses, changing their identity in order to ensure anonymity. We make a distinction here between protected identity, which does not involve removing the victim from his environment, and building a new identity through the above-mentioned program, which involves breaking any ties with the environment of origin (Iuliana, 2009).

This integrated legislative approach to such severe forms of violence recognizes the fact that the institutional response of the state must be a multidimensional one that combines the rigor of the law with specialized social assistance measures.

6. Institutions involved in the Victim Protection Mechanism

The protection of women against all forms of violence, whether we are talking about violence within or outside the family, trafficking or any other form of violence, is based in Romania through an integrated system of policies, strategies, normative acts and application methodologies. At the central level, this protection system involves a complex inter-institutional collaboration with the aim of moving from legislative regulation to the application of safety measures. All this construction is supported by key government institutions, which have specific responsibilities.

- *The Ministry of Internal Affairs*, through the police officers and police stations, ensures emergency intervention and the investigation of criminal cases.
- *The Ministry of Justice,* through the courts of law and the public prosecutor's office, ensures equal access to justice and the conduct of justice in conditions that guarantee the protection of the victim;
- *The Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity* coordinates policies in the field of social assistance, financing of support services and reintegration of victims. At the same time, the ministry is developing strategies to cover legislative gaps and improve victims' access to support services.
- *The National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men* (ANES) is the central authority in the field of monitoring gender-based violence, which bases its strategies on the phenomenon of violence. At the level of ANES, the free 24/7 hotline for victims of domestic violence, discrimination based on sex, sexual harassment, and human trafficking operates at 0800.500.333.
- *The National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption* (ANPDCA) carries out duties in situations of violence involving children, either witnesses of violence or direct victims, and by developing the

methodology for the application of the relevant normative acts in the field, ensures their protection.

- *The National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons* (ANITP) manages cases of exploitation of persons/trafficking, ensuring the victim's connection with specialized recovery services. All these institutions form an institutional implementation and monitoring mechanism, the purpose of which is to create a strong, pertinent response capable of ensuring the necessary diligence of the state in protecting women's rights.

At the level of local public authorities, specialized services are set up with a role in taking over and securing victims, intervening in crisis situations, and evaluation, in order to access social services for the purpose of rehabilitation and social reintegration.

- *The Social Assistance Directorate/General Directorate of Social Assistance of the Municipality of Bucharest* (DAS/DGASMB) has the specific attributions aimed at hosting victims, with or without children, for a limited period in emergency reception centers, and social and psychological counseling of victims by accessing their internal and external resources in order to initiate social reconstruction. At the same time, DAS/DGASMB also has responsibilities in counseling the aggressor in special counseling centers for aggressors.
- *The General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection* (DGASPC) establishes specialized Services/Compartments for Supporting Victims of Crime (SSVI/CSVI), speaking here of violent crimes, with attributions of informing and counseling victims according to the provisions of Law 211/2004, as well as specialized compartments in providing support services to victims of domestic violence (Domestic Violence Compartments), according to Law 217/2003.

Also at the local level, the involvement of civil society is felt through the establishment *of NGOs* with attributions in the protection of victims, which collaborate with local and/or central state institutions in order to respect women's rights, secure victims, facilitate access to services, and rehabilitate and gain autonomy.

The research methodology included the analysis and interpretation of European and domestic legislative documents, the study of the existing files within the public authorities responsible for the protection of the rights of victims of domestic violence, and of the victims of violent crimes; for this research, no empirical data were collected.

Violence against women is a global phenomenon, hidden from the eyes of society by not noticing, which takes on a multitude of facets, and which, due to its complexity, both from the point of view of the portrait of the aggressor, whether we are talking about family or trafficking, violence being its way of manifestation, and from the perspective of the increased vulnerability and on almost all levels of the victims, determine a multidisciplinary response and approach from state institutions.

7. The social worker, the guarantor of the application of rights in society

Social assistance, in the entire context of victim protection, is the link between the rights guaranteed by the normative acts and their effective realization. If international instruments confer the right to human security, the social worker ensures that this right is operationalized. The activity of social assistance in the architecture of victim protection is an integrated activity, with a multidisciplinary approach that revolves around three main dimensions:

- assessing the risks and needs of the victim, through risk assessment sheets from the perspective of providing social services, identifying forms of violence, and developing the safety plan. By applying the specific instruments of social assistance, subtle, early indicators of future serious aggressions can be revealed, and the victim can be guided to request the support of the judicial bodies (Dima, 2020; Ministerial Order nr. 20.840/ 21 septembrie 2022).

- at the same time, the social worker has the role of facilitator of access to justice, by informing the victim about his rights, levers that he can access, and beyond legal advice, the intervention aims to deconstruct the mechanisms of blame, helping the victim to move from the object of violence to the subject of rights (Columban, n.d.).

- the case management and the support network are carried out by the social worker by coordinating the resources, ensuring the link between the victim and the other institutions, respectively, the police, emergency reception centers, hospitals, followed by the monitoring of the victim's situation so that the intervention is not limited to the critical moment but also rehabilitation and reintegration services are provided, so that the victim makes informed decisions (Vartic, 2022).

Also, according to the Special Law 211/2004, the crime of domestic violence benefits from certain facilitating provisions for the victims, from our point of view precisely to give the possibility of social reintegration and breaking the dependence on the aggressor. Thus, victims of domestic violence have the right to emergency aid in the form of vouchers that allow them to purchase medicines, hygiene products, transport, accommodation and food, in the amount of five minimum gross basic salaries per country, according to Decision no. 541/2023, through the DGASPC or the NGO`s enrolled in the mechanism.

All these rights have been provided by the legislator to encourage victims to file complaints against aggressors as well as to facilitate their rehabilitation process.

8. Proposals and conclusions

In Romania, female victims of violence remain silent, either because they do not consider themselves victims, or because they blame themselves, or they see themselves as unimportant for society as they are stigmatized by the aggressor, or

because they do not see solutions for the situation in which they find themselves, and then they choose silence. In order to stop this circle of silence, it is necessary, from the point of view of this work, to carry out information campaigns, through life models, in all environments, in order to be able to recognize a form of violence, the quality of victim, and what family and social normality entails. Also, the response and sanction coming from the state must be much more prompt, so that the victim, when he chooses to take a stand, is not caught in the convoluted labyrinth of justice, knowing that, for a real and visible access to support and protection services, the victim must trust the institutions, to the detriment of the aggressor.

Another factor that could influence the victim's decision to follow the criminal process could be the initiation of the criminal action ex officio, at which point the victim realizes that she is not alone against the aggressor. At the same time, by stipulating the obligation to wear the electronic surveillance device (through which the aggressor is monitored regarding the obligation to keep his distance from the victim), *without the need for the consent of the victim*, who often does not have the necessary knowledge, one could promptly intervene in the situation when the aggressor approaches the victim, and by bringing him to justice quickly when he violates the protection order, victims would be encouraged and aggressors would be discouraged.

Although the legislative framework has substantially aligned itself with European standards, the social reality shows marked discrepancies between the legal norm and the practical implementation of protection measures; forms of violence targeting women belonging to vulnerable groups or minorities are often underreported, due to cultural barriers and limited access to information.

Regardless of whether we are talking about the personal situation of the victim or the response of the authorities, the data reveal that in Romania the black figure of violence against women is much higher than the one reported, with a complex causality, and the response of society through the competent institutions, regarding the victim and aggressor, is most of the time timid.

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