

Advocacy Report

Meeting attended:

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 67th session
7 and 8 periodic reports of Romania, 6 July 2017, Palais de Nations, Geneva

Attended by Irina Elisabetha Rusu, GWI Intern

Subject of meeting:

The meeting highlighted current projects Romania has undertaken in order to overcome challenges such as discrimination or domestic violence. Moreover, the Romanian delegation underlined the role of education and the involvement of the government in elimination all forms of discrimination against women. Another feature of the discussion was the integration of Roma women in the community.

Refers to SDG no #: (please reference)

All SDG were tackled with emphasis on SDG no #4,5,8,10,11

Relevant treaties/conventions/resolutions:

No material outcome as the meeting had the objective of reporting the Romania's position on the fight against all forms of discrimination against women and Committee's inquiries regarding country's Action Plan.

Session Highlights

Ms. Aurelia Grațîela Drăghici, Secretary of State of the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men presented the statement of Romania on the ONU CEDAW before the Committee. The statement underlined the partnerships with the civil society, Romania's rigorous involvement in the "HeForShe" campaign alongside other projects focusing on equal opportunities between men and women. Moreover, Ms. Drăghici mentioned Romania's position on domestic violence, violence against women, sexual violence and human trafficking. Concerning the proactive measures to prevent discrimination against women, the report focused on the education, health, sustainable development and social inclusion.

The Romanian delegation was formed of representatives of the National Agency for Equal Opportunities, Ministry of the Internal Affairs, Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Business, Commerce and Entrepreneurship and Ministry of National Education. All parties involved agree to the fact that the creation of partnerships and the involvement of NGOs is necessary for progressing with the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

The Committee of Experts raised several matters with reference to Romania's progress against discrimination against women. They expressed their concern regarding the implementation of projects and regulations, the lack of trust Romanian population has in the legal system and lastly, the lack of official financial support system for gender issues. With respect to minorities, the Experts requested information referring to the integration of Roma women in the community and then, the involvement of the Church in the Romanian society.

Special Rapporteur Report

General Comments:

- The delegation mentioned that gender equality represents a priority on the 2017-2020 Governance Program and there is, for the first time, a distinct chapter devoted to CEDAW's concept - Respect and dignity for women (Chapter 9). The President of Romania expressed his public commitment to achieving gender equality by joining the "HeForShe" Campaign and becoming one of the 10 global leaders for the previously mentioned movement.
- Being aware of the importance of interinstitutional cooperation, the Romanian government created the Interministerial Committee for the Prevention and Combat of Domestic Violence (complying with the Istanbul Convention).
- The National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (ANES) focuses on the following: equal opportunities and treatment between men and women, also preventing and combating domestic violence. The bureau adequate in developing effective policies and addressing challenges in both areas of focus.
- Regarding sustainable development, the delegation mentioned the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania Horizons 2013-2020: accelerated modernization of the education and training systems, public health and social services. Furthermore, the National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction 2015-2020 was approved, the social benefits include: family allowances, social and special benefits.

Challenges

- Fifty percent (50%) of Romanian population (of which 60% women) live in rural areas;
- Despite an increase in the private-public partnerships and in the involvement of NGOs, Romania has made no progress with regards to gender budgeting. On this matter, ANES and *Corona Iasi Foundation* submitted the project "Gender Budgeting in Public Policies".
- The education system faces vulnerabilities such as early drop out, abandonment and insufficient adaption of education services to the needs of children, also the fact that parents are working abroad. In order to reduce vulnerabilities, the government introduced: free after school program and transportation for all pupils, food and school supplies for vulnerable children.
- The health deterioration issue is present as a result of aging population.

Progress

- The government introduced maternity measures and additional gender human rights in the working environment. The implementation and application of these was successful due to the sanctions businesses received when they neglected raising awareness of these rights at the workplace.
- Romanian mentality continues to change in favor of women, in the later years, their involvement in politics increased and they became more ambitious and motivated to reach for high positions in companies. In terms of political participation, the number of women increased from 12% to 21%. This change was also a result of the implementation of the minimum of 30% for both men and women on the lists of candidates for elections, as a condition for validation.
- The National Day of Gender Equality was adopted on 8 May 2015. The date also represents the start of the Equal Opportunities Week for Women and Men event cycle.
- Regarding domestic violence and violence against women, Romania has harmonized the internal legislation with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, completing and modifying laws. Amendments made include ensuring protection by immediately removing the domestic aggressor in situation of immediate danger or regulate psychological violence as a crime with a prison sentence of three months to one year/a fine/community working hours.
- With regards to sexual violence, the government aims to set up eight centers of crises for rape by concluding partnerships with county hospitals, where emergency primary units operate.

International cooperation (as of Romania's delegation introductory statement)

- Accession of Romania in 2016 to the Partly Enhanced Agreement - European Center for Interdependence and Global Solidarity - North South Center/CNS.
- Between May 2015 and December 2016, Romania, through ANES, provided expertise in the Twinning Project "Support to the Implementation of Gender Equality" in the Republic of Macedonia, in consortium with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Portugal.
- ANES is part of the National Committee for the Organization of the World Conference of Francophone Women.
- Kingdom of Norway is Romania's financing partner in the gender based violence projects aiming at implementing the Istanbul Convention. Their focus is on the development of at least eight assisting centers for aggressors at the local level and intervention programs for aggressors in order to prevent the relapse of domestic violence acts. The Norwegian financial mechanism also financed the project *National Campaign for Awareness and Public Information on Family Violence*, creating a free telephone line dedicated to combating domestic violence.

Education

- Legally, Romania respects the principle of non-discrimination, both in terms of training for students and adults by ensuring equal access rights at all levels and forms of pre-university, higher education and lifelong learning, without any form of discrimination.
- The government plans to provide free early education for children, with the condition that the mothers can prove they will return to the labour market within 6 months.
- In order to break stereotypes, the perspective of gender will be added in the school books, and increasing the number of awareness campaigns will be a priority.
- Considering Roma integration, 1% of university places are allocated to Romani youth, encouraging the willingness to study and to develop a successful career. The Roma community is engaged in summer school programs in the language Romani.
- The project *SECOND CHANCE*, addressed to individuals who did not finish the primary and secondary education continues to be a success. So far it has helped around 7000 persons, of which 60% are Roma, and 40% are women.

Health

- The health sector introduced several programs meaning to support women and children: family planning, measures and maternity with no risk, prevention and control of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV and early screening.

Other information

- The church is a fundamental stone for Romania and its culture and it is not considered to hinder women's rights. Romania states that the church protects vulnerable groups and is a contributor to social stability.

Educational Take Away for GWI:

- The involvement of NGOs becomes more essential in the fight against discrimination against women.
- Raising awareness on matters related to gender equality is needed in order to change mentalities and motivate women to be ambitious.