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**RT 4 – Women and Girls: catalyzing to achieve gender equality**

**Core commitments:**

**Commitment 1: To support the autonomy of women and girls action as agents of change and leaders, including by increasing support for local groups of women who are essential to humanitarian action.**

At international level, UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development is a global development action program that promotes the balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. For the first time, actions target both developed and developing countries, and the Sustainable Development Goal 5 - Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls sets out important strategic directions for all states.

In this respect, starting from the ODD5 sub-objectives, Romania elaborated the Draft Decision on the approval of the National Strategy for the Promoting Gender Equality and Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence for the Period 2018-2021 and the Operational Plan on the Implementation of the National Strategy on promoting equality between women and men and preventing and combating domestic violence 2018-2021 aimed at concrete measures in the field of education by setting out the related indicators:

*1.1. Raising awareness of children and young people about the legal provisions in the field of gender equality*

a) Inclusion in the curriculum of some notions of gender based violence and gender equality

Indicators: Order of the Minister of National Education on the inclusion in the curriculum of some notions regarding gender based violence and gender equality.

b) Gender mainstreaming in school textbooks

Indicators: Developing terms of reference for gender mainstreaming in school textbooks.

c) Organizing information and awareness raising campaign among pupils and students on the meaning and importance of respecting the right to non-discrimination and equal opportunities for women and men

d) Organizing an information and awareness raising campaign among pupils and students on May 8, Gender Equality Day, Week of Equal Opportunities for Women and the number of schools and universities included in the awareness campaign;

*1.2. Combating gender stereotypes among young people*

a) Organize an awareness raising campaign for the high school students on encouraging career choices in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in the fields of information and communication technologies

b) Organizing a campaign to raise awareness and promote the role and importance of developing non - cognitive skills for the adolescents with a focus on eliminating stereotypes and all forms of discrimination against women and girls

• At the moment, the draft law for amending and completing the Law no. 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, being under discussion at the level of the specialized commissions of the Romanian Parliament, provides important measures regarding the gender perspective and regulates for the central and local civil and military institutions and authorities with a more than 50 employees, as well as private companies with more than 50 employees, the possibility of identifying an employee to assign tasks in the field of equal opportunities between men and women or the possibility for the employer to hire an expert / technician in equal opportunities within the existing salary budget.

In September 2017 in New York, during the 72nd UN General Assembly, the Romanian President presented the Good Practice Model on Equal Opportunities Expert as an integral part of Romania's HeForShe Campaign Report. In this context, President Klaus Iohannis stressed that by 2020, 70% of Romanian institutions will have experts in the field of gender equality. This ambitious model has been highly appreciated by UNWomen officials. Romania is one of the top 10 global leaders who have become champions of the "HeForShe" campaign and its public commitment to gender equality has been expressed. Commitments undertaken by Romania in the campaign are aimed at: Creating a new occupation - Equal Opportunities Expert, launching a new integrated monitoring and reporting system to prevent all forms of domestic violence, launching programs to involve girls and boys in social life, political and economic, with the mobilization of 100,000 young people.

Commitment no. 1 assumed by our country was based on the introduction of the Equal Opportunities Expert (COR 242230) from 2014 into the Classification of Occupations in Romania (according to the Joint Order of MMFPSPV and INS no. 1419/328/2014 regarding the modification and completing Classification of Occupations in Romania).

According to the draft law, at the level of the institution / company, from the perspective of the specific domain of each entity in which it operates, the equal opportunity expert, the equal opportunities technician or the designated person with attributions in the field of equal opportunities for women and men, will have the following main attributions:

a) Analyzes the context of the occurrence and evolution of the phenomenon of gender discrimination as well as the non-observance of the principle of equal opportunities for women and men and recommends solutions to comply with this principle, according to the law;

b) Formulate recommendations / observations / proposals to prevent / manage / remedy the context of risk that could lead to violations of the principle of equal opportunities between women and men, respecting the principle of confidentiality;

c) Propose measures to ensure equal opportunities for women and men, assess their impact on women and men,

d) develop action plans for the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities for women and men, including at least: active measures to promote equal opportunities and treatment for women and men and the elimination of direct and indirect discrimination based on gender, measures to prevent and combat harassment at the workplace, equal treatment measures with regard to remuneration policy, promotion into higher positions and decision-making.

e) Elaborates, substantiates, evaluates and implements programs and projects in the field of equal opportunities and treatment for women and men;

f) Provides specialized advice for the application of the provisions of the national and community legislation in the field of equal opportunities for women and men.

At the same time, the draft law regulates the definition of gender based violence from the perspective of the Istanbul Convention and the inclusion in the composition of the COJES of relevant institutions at the local level, namely DGASPC, as executive authority at the territorial level and the County Council as a deliberative authority with a key role in coordinating local authorities in order to strengthen the functional capacity of COJES, as well as to improve the efficiency and cooperation of the interinstitutional mechanism at the local level.

• Also, within the Governance Program for the period 2018 - 2020, Chapter Public policies in the field of labor and social justice, Section 8 "Respect and dignity for women" from the gender perspective, the following measures are foreseen:

- Establishment of a national network of experts in the field of equal opportunities,

- Inclusion in the curriculum of the concept of gender based violence and gender perspective.

In order to achieve this measure, a working group was set up at the ANES level, including specialists from the Ministry of National Education.

**Commitment 2: Ensure Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights in Accordance with the Action Program and subsequent conference papers for all women and teenagers in crisis situations.**

The Romanian Constitution guarantees the right to health services for all citizens. Law no.95/2006 regarding the health system reform is the main legislation in the field. This law establishes the organization of medical assistance and medical social insurance system. The medical assistance services for women and children are financed through the medical social insurance fund, for both preventive and curative services, which are included in the minimum and basic package. These services are also financed by the state budget, through the national health programs adopted annually by law. The concern of the Romanian Government for ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health has materialized in order to improve the health of women and children through several normative acts, such as:

1. The National Programme for women and children’s health - includes measures for family planning and for a risk free maternity. This program also includes measures for in vitro fertility and embryo transfer;

2. The National Programme for surveillance and control of infectious diseases includes measures for preventing and controlling sexual transmissible diseases and HIV;

3. The National Programme for smear test that includes early screening.

A. The list of measures implemented in order to facilitate the access to modern services for family planning and prevention of unwanted pregnancies:

1. Integrating family planning measures in medical assistance programs as part of the basic package services, that includes primary medical assistance and starting with 2013 these are part of the ambulatory basic package services;

2. The sustainability of the free distribution of contraceptives programme for socially disadvantaged people (unemployed, pupils, students, people with social benefits, people that live in rural areas, women that go through abortion on request within the medical facilities, people with no income);

3. Rising awareness about modern contraceptives, in all areas of public life.

According to this national programme regarding the family planning, a national network of family planning offices was established. This network covered most of the important cities in the country and the quality of the services provided improved over the years. There were funds allocated for purchasing third generations contraceptives, condoms, all delivered free to socially disadvantaged people.

B. The list of preventing risk free maternity, in order to improve the access to quality medical services for pregnant women and mothers:

1. Ensuring the legal framework for access to preventive medical services for women/pregnant women, by including them in the basic medical package of services;

2. Integrating in the national sub -programme for women’s health of specific medical services, such as medical services for preventing congenital malformation through early diagnosis and medical services for identifying the Rhesus syndrome.

3. Dissemination of information regarding reproductive health through different channels (mass- media, informational campaigns developed by local and central authorities and non-governmental organizations);

4. Implementing and disseminating the Pregnant Notebook programme, that includes the registration of all medical services delivered to pregnant women along the pregnancy;

5. Elaborating 20 practical guides for medical assistance in the field of OBGYN;

6. Three level ranking the OBGYN facilities based on competences in order to prevent maternal decease;

7. Improving the community nurses network and the medical mediators network, especially in the underprivileged areas around the country;

8. Improving the legal framework for midwife profession;

9. Ensuring the access to in vitro fertilization procedures for peoples with difficulties in conceiving;

According to the previsions of Government Decision no. 1028/2014 for approving the National Strategy for Health, the Ministry of Heath adopted the following strategical measures to decrease the number of unwanted pregnancies, the incidence of abortions by request, and the number maternal mortality due to abortion:

a. Increasing the capacity for planning, purchasing and monitoring the delivery of free contraceptives, through:

• improving the Informational system for logistic management of free contraceptive delivery;

• conducting a national survey regarding reproductive health and family planning;

• improving the legal framework.

b. Ensuring the access of eligible persons to contraceptive products and free distribution;

c. Increasing the geographical coverage of family planning suppliers by:

• Training of personal in the field of basic medical family planning, especially in the underprivileged areas of the country;

• Strengthening the capacity of medical centers and family planning centers by improving the skills of the employees.

d. Rising awareness of the population regarding contraceptive methods, especially among vulnerable groups.

During 2016, the Ministry of Health started to develop a National Survey on Reproductive Health, which will measure the progress achieved in this field, over the years.

In 2001 the Government adopted the National Programme for preventing, monitoring and control of HIV infection. The main objectives of this programme are:

a) National wide prevention and monitoring of HIV infection:

- purchasing quick tests and ELISA tests for diagnosing HIV/AIDS.

- free counselling for testing and voluntary tasting for people with high risk such as: pregnant women, TBC patients, medical personal involved in accidents by exposing to biological products, clinical monitoring of HIV patients.

- registering HIV/AIDS people from all medical units;

- supplying all the hospitals and emergency units with proper medication;

b) Treatment for HIV/AIDS people:

- registering all HIV/AIDS people from all medical units, national wide;

- supplying all the hospitals and emergency units with proper medication;

Most of the measures taken by the Government are targeted for prevention, early screening and treatment of cervical cancer. The sub-programme for early screening of cervical cancer adopted in 2012 includes free Babes-Papanicolau testing for all eligible women, at national level. This measure includes women between 25-64 years old and is a programme implemented in 5 years.

The National Strategy for public health for the period 2014-2020 includes an important strategic objective named: reducing the number of transmissible mortal diseases. In order to implement this objective there were adopted the following actions:

 increasing the planning and coordination capacity for testing cervical cancer;

 strengthening the implementation of the programme for cervical cancer screening;

An important part of the National Strategy for Public Health is the annual implementation of raising awareness and educational campaigns, targeted on informational materials about different mortal diseases, national programmes for prevention. Some of these campaigns are focused on girls, women, pregnant women and mothers, such as: The European week for cervical cancer prevention; The international month for information regarding breasts cancer; The national month for information regarding the consequences of alcohol consuming; The international week for breasts breast-feeding; The international day of contraception; The international day for fighting against HIV/AIDS.

**Commitment 3: Implement a coordinated approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in a crises context, including through the Call for Action to Protect against Emergency Violence**

In March 2016, Romania has ratified the Istanbul Convention by Law no.30/2016, and the instrument of ratification was deposited with the Council of Europe in May 2016. The Convention entered into force in Romania starting the 1st of September 2016.

Specifically, a legislative package was developed to implement the Istanbul Convention which included the following amendments:

1) Draft law amending and supplementing Law no. 286/2009 on the Criminal Code;

2) Draft law amending and supplementing Law no. 135/2010 on the Code of Criminal Procedure;

3) Draft law on amending and supplementing Law no. 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men;

4) Draft law on amending and supplementing Law no. 217/2003 on preventing and combating family violence;

In order to implement the Istanbul Convention, the Government of Romania initiated the draft Law no. 217/2003 on the preventing and combating domestic violence, republished, as subsequently amended and supplemented, which was approved by the Government on 8th of February 2018 (L147 / 2018) and was submitted to the Romanian Parliament for discussion in the specialized committees, the urgent procedure being approved at the session of the Senate of Romania plenum, dated 26.02.2018.

The draft for amending and completing the Law no. 217/2003 on the Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence, as amended by the Government of Romania, is able to provide an integrated, unitary and coherent response to the phenomenon of domestic violence, offering legal solutions in full compliance with all the provisions of the Convention Istanbul, CEDAW, and in accordance with the specific objectives assumed by the Governance Program for the period 2017-2020, Chapter Public Policies in the Field of Labor and Social Justice, Section 8 - Respect and dignity for women.

The central pillar of future amendments to Law no. 217/2003 on the prevention and combating of domestic violence is the regulation of the provisional protection order according to art. 52 of the Convention, which seeks to extend the police's prerogatives in the sense of ensuring the protection of victims by immediately removing the domestic aggressor in situations of immediate danger. The regulatory model and the methodological norms and related procedures that will be elaborated for issuing and applying the provisional protection order are based on the example of good practices implemented in Austria and Spain

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Also, for the first time in Romania, the observance of provisional protection orders as well as protection orders can be monitored through the use of electronic devices (electronic bracelets).

Regarding social services, at government level, within the Governance Program for the period 2018 - 2020, Section 8 "Respect and dignity for women" are stipulated concrete measures are taken, namely: the development of a network of at least 20 protected shelters for victims of domestic violence, the creation of 10 crises centers for rape cases and the development of a network of 8 assisting centers for aggressors, at the local level, as well as regulating measures to prevent the relapse of domestic violence acts.

In order to provide financial support for the development of all the necessary means and tools for the enforcement of the legislation, ANES has developed a number of projects, which are in different stages of development:

- The predefined gender-based violence project, which aims at implementing the Istanbul Convention under the „Justice” Program financed by the Kingdom of Norway through the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, with a 36-month implementation period, and amounting to €2.5 million, focusing among other things on the development of at least 8 assisting centers for aggressors and 10 crisis centers for rape cases at the local level, coupled with the elaboration of working procedures and specialized intervention programs for aggressors in order to prevent the relapse of domestic violence acts.

- The VENUS project to combat violence against women and domestic violence will last for 4 years and is worth 14 million euros from the Human Capital Operational Program and will develop measures centered on the integrated and unified approach to social services, socio-professional and professional training of specialists in the field, in order to prevent and combat domestic violence at national level.

On the 5th of October 2016 the Romanian Government approved the Memorandum on the establishment of the Inter-ministerial Committee for Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence. The establishment of this Committee, with an advisory role in preventing and combating domestic violence, was necessary to ensure a stronger cohesion between all relevant stakeholders regarding the underpinning and applying of complex measures under the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. The Inter-ministerial Committee has the following main competences: ensuring cooperation between institutions and organizations for implementing national public policy and government plans to prevent and combat domestic violence; supporting the implementation and monitoring of the Istanbul Convention; supporting proposals for improving the legal framework on the prevention and combating of domestic violence.

ANES carried out during the period, April 2015-April 2017, the project "National Campaign for Awareness and Public Information on Family Violence", through the RO20 Program "Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence", financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, in amount of 211,446 Euro. The campaign was designed to ensure broad coverage, focusing on the existence and the utility of the free telephone line dedicated to combating domestic violence, 0800 500 333 as a public information vector.

**Commitment 4: Ensure gender mainstreaming in humanitarian programming**

In accordance with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid[[1]](#footnote-1), gender considerations are systematically taken into account in EU humanitarian assistance. The Consensus highlights the importance of integrating gender considerations, including protection strategies against sexual and gender based violence and promoting the active participation of women affected by crisis in the humanitarian response. Thus, the European Commission finances the "EU Volunteers Initiative for Humanitarian Aid". The "EU Volunteers for Humanitarian Aid" initiative supports the implementation of relevant projects for the mobilization of volunteers from the EU (juniors and seniors) for humanitarian aid to support and complement humanitarian aid in third countries, with a focus on strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable communities; affected by disasters and implementing organizations. An important role in promoting humanitarian actions lies with non-governmental, non-profit, law-based organizations, civil law bodies, the International Federation of National Red Cross Societies and the Red Crescent.

**Commitment 5: Complete harmonization of humanitarian policies, framework and normative acts on gender equality, women's autonomy and women's rights.**

The commitment to promote and introduce gender perspective into national policies is reaffirmed at government level through the vision of the Governance Program for the period 2017-2020, from which gender equality is a priority area in the proposed social model, and where there is a distinct section devoted to in this area - Chapter Public Policies in the Field of Labor and Social Justice, Point 8 - Respect and dignity for women.

Specifically, Point 8 of the Governance Program covers the following measures: Establishment of a national network of experts in the field of equal opportunities, elaboration of methodological norms for the issuance of emergency protection orders, creation of a system for monitoring the protection orders (electronic devices, mobile applications, development of working procedures for measures to prevent domestic violence cases, elaboration of methodological norms on psychological counseling in divorce cases where a history of domestic violence has been recorded, the inclusion in the curriculum of the notion gender based violence and gender perspective, the establishment of specialized intervention teams at the county level in the area of ​​domestic violence, the training of social workers in the fields of domestic violence and gender equality. reviewing concrete measures, namely: developing a network of at least 20 protected shelters for victims of domestic violence, creating 8 crises centers for rape and developing a network of 8 centers for assisting aggressors at the local level and regulating measures to prevent the relapse of domestic violence acts.

Also, taking into account the Recommendations of the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW-ONU) and Agenda 2030, ANES elaborated the draft GD on the approval of the National Strategy on Promoting Gender Equality and Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence for the Period 2018-2021 and the Operational Plan on the Implementation of the National Strategy on Promoting Gender Equality and Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence 2018-2021. As mentioned above, the National Strategy is structured on two pillars, thus ensuring for the first time an integrated approach for the two related areas of intervention: equal opportunities for women and men and preventing and combating domestic violence.

The gender mainstreaming approach is one of the specific areas of intervention within the Pillar on Promoting Gender Equality and aims at:

Introducing gender perspective into national policies by:

a) Develop a gender mainstreaming methodology in national policies and programs;

b) Strengthen and improve the legislative framework for the organization and operation of COJES;

c) Active involvement of the National Commission in the field of gender equality (CONES) in the implementation and multiplication of all activities in the Strategy and the General Action Plan;

d) Developing of a national network of experts in the field of equal opportunities.

e) Encouraging NGOs to get involved in formulating and promoting alternative proposals to public policies initiated by the Government in the field of gender budgeting.

One of the priorities of the current Government is to harmonize internal legislation with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, currently the most comprehensive international treaty on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, ratified by Romania through Law no. 30/2015, which entered into force on 1 September 2016.

In order to carry out the complex legislative steps required by the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, the Government of Romania initiated the draft law for amending and completing the Law no. 217/2003 on the preventing and combating domestic violence, republished, as subsequently amended and supplemented, which was approved by the Government on 8th of February 2018 (L147/2018) and was submitted to the Romanian Parliament for discussion in the specialized committees , the urgent procedure being approved at the session of the plenum of the Senate of Romania, dated 26.02.2018.

The draft for amending and completing the Law no. 217/2003 on the preventing and combating domestic violence, with the subsequent modifications and completions, elaborated by the Romanian Government has a bigger coverage comparing with the regulations in force and is able to give an integrated, unitary and coherent response to the phenomenon of domestic violence, providing legal solutions in full compliance with all the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, CEDAW, and in line with the specific objectives assumed by the Governance Program for the period 2017-2020, Chapter Public Policies in the Field of Labor and Social Justice, Section 8 - Respect and dignity for women.

1. DG ECHO, 2017, Gender: different needs, adapted assistance, <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/thematic/gender_en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)