

DOING IT RIGHT: Making women's networks accessible

*With a special focus on women from minority and
disadvantaged groups*

2018



Funded by the European Commission



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Abbreviations

WAVE	Women against Violence Europe Network
CoE	Council of Europe
IC	Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)
WBT	Western Balkans and Turkey
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
VAW	Violence against Women
DV	Domestic Violence
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
KWN	Kosovo Women's Network
AWEN	Albanian Women Empowerment Network
Sida	The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

Acknowledgements

The research report 'Doing it right: Making networks accessible. With a special focus on women from minority and disadvantaged groups' was written by Irena Shtraza (Albanian Women Empowerment Network) in collaboration with the Gender Alliance Development Centre Albania, under the guidance of the WAVE office. We would like to thank all other partners of the project for sharing information. Last but not least, we wish to express our gratitude to SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence Niksic, Montenegro, for the detailed information and their content-review. This research report would not have been possible without the generous support of UN Women and the European Commission.

Introduction

This research report is prepared on behalf of the UN Women Project *“Support the establishment and strengthening of regional platforms of civil society organisations (with special focus on organisations representing women from minority and disadvantaged groups) to advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies in line with CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention”*, under the programme *“Ending Violence against Women: Implementing Norms, Changing Minds”*.

The aim of the project is to strengthen women’s voices and agency, including of women’s organisations working with and representing women from disadvantaged groups, at a regional level. The expected outcome is the strengthening of the capacities of women’s organisations’ platforms and/or networks as a vehicle to support women’s civic engagement in CEDAW and Istanbul Convention monitoring and reporting.

The research report focuses on the topic of *making networks accessible*, especially for women from minority and disadvantaged groups. It aims to offer an overview of the current situation in the following partner countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey regarding accessible networks, and it includes two case studies as tools for learning from good practices. It represents an initial attempt to analyse the inclusiveness of women’s networks in this region. The report also focuses on the following five key topics, the openness of organisations, the accessibility of their services, how women from minority and/or disadvantaged groups are being included, the rotation of power structures within networks and compliance of network’s efforts with the efforts of the Istanbul Convention, and it seeks to analyse the different networks’ working approaches.

Methodology

The report was prepared in coordinated efforts among WAVE and project partner organisations. The Gender Alliance Development Centre and Albanian Women Empowerment Network, both WAVE members, took the lead in preparing this report. A qualitative research methodology was used for the preparation of the report, as outlined below:

- Group discussion on the research report and possible best practice examples, during the project partners meeting in Belgrade, Serbia, on 25-26 January 2018;
- Information gathering on five key identified topics to be compiled by each country;
- Discussion/semi-structured interviews with country representatives (WAVE members NGOs) on best practices in each country, in Ankara, Turkey on March 30, 2018;
- Final data gathering through information sheets compiled by partner NGOs;
- Desk review of existing reports on the topic.

The five key identified topics, previously highlighted, will feed into better understanding the nature of women's networks, the role played as a linchpin in successful networking between women's NGOs and activists, as well as their accessibility for minority and disadvantaged groups.

Networking to achieve more: An overview of practices in the Western Balkan region and Turkey

Working alone can sometimes be challenging for women's organisations; this can equally be the case for groups of activists. Networking has proved to be a very effective mean of enhancing the power and the influence of citizen's voices in advocating for better policies, improving governance, and increasing coordinated efforts between service providers. Additional benefits are the exchange of valuable information, new resources and best-practice models. Networking can maximize the reach, scale and impacts of interventions/ programs of the CSOs and activists.¹

While networks may be one of the oldest forms of social organisation, networks of civil society groups and organisations, however, are characterized by some distinctive organisational principles and properties.

¹ Supporting Civil Society Networks in International Development Programs, AED Center for Civil Society and Governance, December 2005.

What is a civil society network?

Civil society networks may be defined as *civil society groups, organisations and sometimes individuals that come together voluntarily to pursue shared purposes of social development or democratic governance*. These purposes may include exchanging resources, addressing common social goals or expressing their identities as community or social group. In civil society networks, member groups and organisations retain their basic autonomy, with their own identity, mission, and governance. **Networks can be composed of informal social relationships or formal bodies that are legally registered and institutionalized.** Civil society networks may be known by many different names, including coalition, alliance, apex body, association, movement, federation, etc. Networks often choose their names based on their own identity, context and language.²

Although active collaboration/networking among women NGOs and/or activists in the Western Balkans & Turkey (WBT) is not always possible due to factors such as funding instability, political context³, the absence of a ‘networking-culture’, etc., there are many positive collaboration efforts in the region. Evidence shows that in WBT, this kind of cooperation among women CSOs is quite successful, be it in a formal or informal manner. Women’s NGOs have managed to create synergies in all countries to organize themselves in networks, uniting women’s voices into a stronger one, enabling them to create effective lobbying tools and allowing them to fulfil their agenda.⁴ These formal and informal collaborations have led to successful actions, such as:

- lobbying and advocating for improved legislation on VAW and DV,
- pushing for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in various countries,
- conducting successful awareness-raising events on VAW/DV and
- undertaking national level initiatives to promote women’s human rights, etc.

In terms of accessibility of networks, especially for women from minority and disadvantaged groups, all women’s NGOs, either single organisations or networks, embrace a proactive approach in line with Article 4.3 of the Istanbul Convention. Article 4.3 of the Istanbul Convention is directly connected to Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR), both emphasizing that matters such as ‘gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, and migrant or refugee status, should not represent grounds for discrimination’. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that migrant and refugee women, women with disabilities and/or women of ethnic minorities, Roma, or women with HIV/Aids, to name a few, may experience multiple forms of discrimination, meaning that support services have to be accessible to all these groups, and at the same time be tailored to their specific needs.

² Supporting Civil Society Networks in International Development Programs, AED Center for Civil Society and Governance, December 2005

³ The political context in Turkey is increasingly precarious, since Turkey has declared a State of Emergency in 2016. Since then, many women’s NGOs and LGBTI organisations have been closed down or banned from organizing any public activities. Other countries, such as Montenegro, are confronted with a lack of understanding of gender-based violence by government agencies.

⁴ Mapping Report: Depicting the situation of women’s NGOs in partner countries of the project. WAVE, 2018

In **Albania**⁵ there are currently three women's networks, one formal and two informal (project based)⁶ ones. The first network (founded in 2011), **Albanian Women Empowerment Network (AWEN)** is a formal network with 10 member organisations, offering services to women victims of DV and human trafficking, empowerment programs and shelters for victims, as well as services for perpetrators of violence. This network has been selected as one of the good practices in the region (*for a detailed description please refer to the Case Study 1*). There are also two other informal networks, called '*The Network against Domestic Violence and Trafficking in Human Beings*' and the '*Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence*'. These project-based networks come together during the project implementation periods with the aim to fulfil specific project activities and objectives. The cooperation between women's NGOs is considered very successful, with women's organisations working together to meet the needs of DV victims, jointly organizing awareness raising events, lobbying and advocating for women's human rights, as well as raising funds for network members (AWEN's case).

There is also another form of collaboration among NGOs working with victims of trafficking, mostly women and children, called '*The National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters*', established in 2007. The goal is to collaborate and coordinate activities and services for the protection, assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration of women, girls and children victims of trafficking. It is composed of all five shelters (one public and four non-public) working on anti-trafficking in Albania⁷.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)** there is currently one informal network '**The Safe Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina**', founded in 2001, working specifically on VAW and DV. This network consists of 32 non-governmental organisations and government institutions engaged in the issue of violence, from the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska). Regarding the *inclusion of women from minority and disadvantaged groups*, all women's organisations, humanitarian associations, and NGOs that are part of the network are working with women refugees, although no organisation has a single programme that specifically supports these groups. Concerning the *openness of the network*, membership in the network is on a voluntary basis, and it is open for all civil society organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina that work in the area of prevention of violence, protection and rehabilitation of victims of all forms of violence.

To be able to take quick and effective action, the Advisory Committee of the Safe Network consisting of 11 organisations, representing 11 different regions, was established in February 2002. Furthermore, seven members of the Safe Network BiH represent the Secretariat of the Network. The Secretariat manages the functioning process of the Safe Network BiH. The chair of the organisation is elected by the members of the Network for a period of 12 months, with a mandate to inform the members about the planned and implemented activities (*power structures*).

⁵ Albania signed the Istanbul Convention on 19 December 2011 and was the second Council of Europe member state to ratify the Convention on 4 February 2013. The Convention entered into force in Albania on 1 August 2014.

⁶ One informal platform/network (project based) was created during the beginning of 2018, under the Programme "Ending Violence against Women: Implementing Norms, Changing Minds" by Center for Legal Civic Initiatives (CLCI).

⁷ https://www.albania.iom.int/publications/leaflets/11%20%20Leaflet_NCAT_KKSAT_ALB%20&%20ENG.pdf

Among the strategic objectives of the network, one of them is to contribute to the creation of and to enable the legislative and policy environment in line with international standards on eliminating violence against women and all forms of discrimination, in *compliance with the Istanbul Convention*⁸.

Two further networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina work with disadvantaged groups. One is specifically involved with organisations working with Roma women – **Roma Women’s Network Uspjeh BiH** – and the other one with organisations working with women with disabilities – **Network of Women with Disabilities BiH**. The latter is a platform created with the aim of improving communication amongst women with disabilities as well as raising awareness in society about this issue.

Another joint action/initiative is **‘Peace with Women’s Face’**, created in 2013. It specifically directs its efforts to these areas of action: cultural memory, transitional justice, advocacy activities and policy change. It was founded by 12 organisations, but there are about ten more grassroots organisations and a large number of peace organisations and activists that support the work of the Initiative. Two organisations coordinate the work of the network: *Foundation “Lara”* from Bijeljina and *“HO Horizonti”* from Tuzla. The creation of the network started with capacity building interventions, such as along dialogues among activists, local workshops, and a joint peace action “Women’s Peace Caravan” conducted in 2013 in 12 cities in BiH ended with a peace meeting in Sarajevo. A key achievement was the agreement reached on the Initiative to establish the Memorial Day on suffering of women during the war in BiH⁹.

“Do not sit and wait for better times. Your time is now, and therefore you need to stand up and make it better. Peace cannot be isolated from us!”

Danka Zelić, a member of the Initiative Peace with Women’s Face

In **Kosovo** the presence of two active networks working on VAW and DV is reported by our WAVE member. The first one, established in 1996, is **Kosovo Women’s Network (KWN)**, originally an informal network of women’s groups and organisations from various regions in Kosovo. Since its inception, KWN has developed into a network that advocates on behalf of Kosova women at the local, regional and international level. Representing the interests of 125¹⁰ organisations of all ethnic groups throughout Kosovo, KWN is a leader among civil society organisations. KWN cooperates regularly with other women’s groups in the region both informally and formally, while it is open to new members, organisations or individuals (*openness of the organisations*).

Regarding the *rotation of power within the network*, The *KWN Board of Directors* is elected by the KWN Assembly of Members during the Annual Membership Meeting in December each year. As the elected representatives of KWN members, it is the second highest decision-making body in the network. The Board of Directors oversees KWN’s work through quarterly meetings, as well as advises on key

⁸ More information on: <http://www.sigurnamreza.ba/en>

⁹ Establishment of the Memorial Day as a non-institutional memory initiative with a growing number of supporters (organisations and individuals) that has been recorded in the Global campaign 16 days of activism against gender-based violence in BiH (advocacy work to institutionalize the date is still an ongoing process).

¹⁰ <http://www.womensnetwork.org/?FaqelD=34>

decisions taken by the network's staff. The *KWN Advisory Board* involves persons who have contributed greatly to KWN's work over the years. They are nominated and approved by the KWN Board of Directors for an unlimited term. They regularly provide advice and assistance to KWN, drawing from their vast knowledge, experience, and connections.

In 2012 the Kosovo Women's Network established a fund (***Kosovo Women's Fund***) that provides small grants for women's organisations lacking access to other sources of funding and seeking to work on women's rights, particularly among rural and/or marginalized groups such as Serbian, Bosnian, Roma Ashkali, Egyptian women and women with disabilities. This fund has enabled many organisations to continue their work. In order to apply, organisations must fulfil some pre-set criteria such as have KWN membership, comply with the organisational strategy; contribute to at least one strategic objective in KWN's Strategic Plan, reach grassroots and/or marginalized individuals and groups, and lack other opportunities to secure funds from donors. This approach constitutes a very good way *to include and empower women from minority or disadvantaged groups*.

In *compliance with the efforts of the Istanbul Convention*, KWN focuses its efforts on enhancing the performance and the quality of services of shelters, particularly towards rehabilitation and reintegration. Besides, KWN has been advocating for the improvement of the mechanisms for reporting and investigating cases of sexual harassment¹¹, in line with Article 40 on Sexual harassment of the Istanbul Convention¹².

The second network, **Kosovo Shelter Coalition**, was established in 2010 as a formal coalition with eight local organisations, but currently comprising only five local shelter organisations working with victims of DV.

Regarding disadvantaged groups, both networks work with women with disabilities.

In Macedonia, there are currently two active networks, namely the National Network to end Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – Voice against Violence and the National Council for Gender Equality. **The National Network to end Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – Voice against Violence** is a formal network, of currently 20 member organisations working on VAW, some of them also providing support services for victims of violence. Formed in December 2010 by CSOs that work on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, it was formally registered a year later. The mission of the Network is to coordinate actions of CSOs towards advancing policies and practices in combating violence against women and domestic violence. The network aims at recognizing women's human rights and promoting them in the Republic of Macedonia.

¹¹ KWN, Annual Report 2017 <http://www.womensnetwork.org/documents/20171219123350317.pdf>

¹² Article 40 on Sexual harassment - Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, is subject to criminal or other legal sanction.

The Network's member organisations are of different size, from small grass-root organisations to bigger organisations working at a national level. Network members represent various ethnic backgrounds and provide support to women belonging to all ethnic groups, regardless of their socio-economic status. The Network is open to all organisations and individuals who would want to join or who would just need assistance and support, recognizing the need to address the issue of women with disabilities, migrant women, Roma women, etc. The network is increasing the grasp of its work to include and address women from these groups specifically. This is an indicator of the *openness of the organisation*, as well as of the *access to services of minority or disadvantaged girls and women*.

Regarding *power rotation*, the network has an executive office and staff, whereas the main decision-making body is the Assembly consisting of representatives of all organisations of the Network and the Management Board consisting of 5 representatives from member-organisations. The Management Board has its President who is also the President of the Network.

The network's approach to violence against women and domestic violence is based on recognition and protection of women's human rights, in line with relevant international conventions (*including the Istanbul Convention*) and declarations; a gender-sensitive approach to violence against women and domestic violence, condemning any kind of gender-based violence ; advocating for victims' interests; approach based on functional practices; solidarity and cooperation among member-organisations and transparency of the work of the Network. The Network is involved in all activities concerning the Istanbul Convention and its implementation in Macedonia¹³. Representatives from the Network are part of the working group developing the Action Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Macedonia.

The National Council for Gender Equality is a network of 116 formal and informal organisations working at a local level and provides services for victims of violence such as counselling, free legal aid, or the national helpline.

These two networks do not work specifically with women refugees/migrants. Only one member organisation called *Open Gate – La Strada Macedonia* works with this target group, while some other member organisations part of the National Network Voice against Violence work with women with disabilities or from the LGBTI community.

In **Montenegro**, there are 3 active women's networks working on women's human rights: The "*Informal National Network against VAW*", "*Women's Roma Network "FIRST"*" and "*Network of SOS helplines*".

The Informal National Network against VAW consists of seven women's NGOs that provide specialist support services, but also advocate for better prevention, protection and prosecution mechanisms in the area of gender-based violence. All organisations work with women refugees, if they are victims of gender-based violence and in need of specialized support. There is currently no organisation that

¹³ Ratified on December 22, 2017 and will enter into force on 1st of July 2018.

particularly specializes in working with disadvantaged groups, but all organisations work with women from diverse backgrounds (such as Roma women, women with disabilities, single mothers).

“Women's Roma Network “FIRST”, selected as one of the good practice examples of networks working with women from minority and disadvantaged groups, constitutes the first formal network accessible for women from minority and disadvantaged groups in Montenegro. The current network has two activists in Berane, two in Podgorica and four in Niksic (central and north regions in Montenegro), and it is currently expanding both in terms of membership and in terms of covered territory (*for a detailed description please refer to Case study 2*).

“Network of SOS helplines” is an informal network consisting of five local SOS helplines all spread in five cities (Podgorica, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Plav and Ulcinj). All organisations work directly with women from different backgrounds, including women from minority and disadvantaged groups, if survivors of gender-based violence. This informal network does not currently meet the needs of women's organisations, due to limited resources and no clear binding mechanisms for its members.

In Serbia there is one active network called **Women against Violence Network** (Mreža Žene protiv nasilja).¹⁴ The Women against Violence Network is a coalition of specialized women's non-governmental organisations that render individual support services to women, and work on changing the social context with the goal of decreasing violence against women in Serbia.

It was established in 2005, emerging from women's continuous networking in Serbia around the issue of decreasing violence against women, with the main goal of strengthening and connecting specialized women's organisations which offer services to survivors (SOS line, counselling, centers, shelters, safe houses, crisis centers, etc.).

The Women against Violence Network is open for association with all organisations and individuals working on the issue of reducing violence against women directly or indirectly, through research, advocacy work, education, lobbying for laws protecting from violence, and who accept and implement the Network's basic principles (*openness of the network*).

The network is active in all five regions of Serbia, each region being coordinated by one organisation. Association Fenomena (WAVE member) coordinates the South-West region of the network, consisting of five organisations. The network is informal and has currently 27 member organisations which are specialized women's NGOs providing support to women victims of violence and working on changing the social context, with the ultimate goal to decrease and end VAW in Serbia. The coordinating organisation of the Network has been Autonomous Women's Centre since the beginning of the networking. The Network is at the moment in the process of decentralization, which means that it will be divided into five regional centers and will have five organisations that will coordinate each center. Those organisations will compose the Management Board of the Network.

¹⁴Information according to WAVE member, *Association Fenomena, Serbia*.

None of the organisations of the network works only with women refugees/migrant women, but some organisations, such as IMPULS (Tutin, South-Western Serbia), dedicate some of their activities to women refugees. Several organisations work specifically with disadvantaged groups such as Roma women, women with disabilities, or women victims of human trafficking (*access to services for vulnerable women*). These organisations are: Anti-trafficking action ASTRA; Atina; Roma Children's Center; Out of Circle, Belgrade (supporting women with disabilities); Roma Center for Women and Children Daje; Out of Circle Vojvodina (supporting women with disabilities); Roma Association of Novi Becej; SOS Line Osvit (offers multilingual support: Roma and Serbian languages). The Women against Violence Network is open to all organisations and individuals working on the issue of reducing violence against women directly or indirectly, through research, advocacy of women's right to life without violence, education, lobbying for laws protecting from violence, and who accept and implement the Network's basic principles.¹⁵

Members of the Network are part of some projects and initiatives regarding the Istanbul Convention. For example, the *I sign Campaign*¹⁶, a regional project, resulting in the changing of the laws and advocating for the implementation of IC in Serbia.

In Turkey, there is¹⁷ currently one informal network formed in 1998, '**The Assembly on Women's Shelters and Solidarity Centers**'. The network currently has 18 member organisations, working in the area of gender equality and VAW. Among the member organisations, there are some working with women refugees, even though they do not focus specifically on this type of work. Two examples of organisations working directly with women refugees are: KADAV (Kadınlarla Dayanışma Vakfı) and AKDAM (Adana Kadın Dayanışma Merkezi ve Sığınma Evi Derneği). When it comes to organisations working with disadvantaged groups, *Engelli Kadın Derneği* works specifically with women with disabilities. Regarding the cooperation between women's NGOs, there is an active collaboration between organisations enabling them to easily communicate or react to issues whenever necessary. These organisations have concrete experience in organizing events together or implementing different projects. The Assembly has two annual meetings each year, the Interim Assembly and the Main Assembly. The Interim Assembly is only for the representatives of the Assembly. This three-day meeting is organized by one of the organisations each year, in their respective city. The Main Assembly is open for both the Assembly organisations and the Assembly participants, bringing together more than 250 women every year. Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation is the permanent secretariat and works together with the host organisation to organize both the Interim and the Main Assembly meeting.

Members of the Assembly do not discriminate among the women, survivors of violence, who contact them for their services. Although none of the organizations work specifically with migrant or refugee women, there are a number of organizations that work with women refugees. Other women's organizations are expanding their field of work, due to the increase demand in services, to migrant and refugee women. For instance, The Foundation for Women's Solidarity, AKDAM and another organization which is not a member organization of the Assembly run a project to foster dialogue

¹⁵ <https://www.zeneprotivnasilja.net/en/about-us/wav-network>

¹⁶ <http://www.potpisujem.org/eng/>

¹⁷Information according to WAVE Member, *The Foundation for Women's Solidarity, Turkey*.

between women's organizations and local actors, to help prevent gender-based discrimination and violence against women among the refugee population. The project aims to meet women's organizations working in the field of violence against women and to increase their knowledge and experience in combating women against violence when it comes to women refugees including Syrian women. Additionally, it aims to share women's organizations experiences and increase cooperation opportunities with other actors in the field. Furthermore, the Association for Women Disabilities (*Engelli Kadın Dernegi*) joined the Assembly, offering the opportunity to understand and gain awareness when it comes to the violence and discrimination experienced by women with disabilities.

Despite all the difficulties due to the political context¹⁸, there have been other concrete efforts to *enhance compliance with the Istanbul Convention*, also through collaboration in joint platforms/actions. During 2017, a group of women's organisations prepared a shadow report for GREVIO (eight organisations) which was shared with all women NGOs in Turkey as well.

Good practice examples in the Western Balkans and Turkey:

Case Study 1: Albanian Women Empowerment Network (AWEN), Albania

Following a long phase of inspirational and capacity building interventions supported by the Swedish Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, in July 2009 eight women's organisations came together and finalized a long fruitful collaboration by creating the Network named "Albanian Women Empowering Network" (AWEN). The establishment of this network became a necessity in order to strengthen the cooperation among these organisations, to increase the impact of the joint interventions and initiatives and to empower the feminist movement in Albania. The creation of the network was supported from the beginning by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation. AWEN was legally registered as a non-profit organisation on 27 December 2011. Now, AWEN is a formally registered network which consists of 10 organisations located in seven districts of Albania from North to South, where two thirds of the Albanian population lives.

The mission of Albanian Women Empowerment Network is to support, protect and promote the rights and interests of women and girls in the Republic of Albania, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language, origin, education, political beliefs, religious and philosophical beliefs or social-economic status. As a network, the mission is to exchange experiences and information, organize joint actions, collaborate and network among member organisations as well as to raise funds on behalf of its members, and most importantly to lobby and advocate at local and central level. Key thematic focus

¹⁸ Since the State of Emergency was declared in Turkey, in July 2016, 6 women's NGOs have been closed down. Many grass root organisations and LGBTI organisations face the same possibility. Furthermore, there seems to be significant repression of LGBTI organisations, as the government of Ankara has, for example, banned any outdoor or indoor activities of these organisations. Even before the ban, many LGBTI activists have been taken into custody during the Pride March in Istanbul 2016. Moreover, women activists have faced the same problems, when organizing the Women's March on the 25th of November 2016. These kind of government decisions are increasingly limiting the freedom and working-remit of specialist women's and LGBTI-NGOs work.

areas are violence against women, the economic empowerment of women and the participation of women in politics.

During the period of 2011-2018 AWEN has realized multiple projects supported by several donors, like Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, Mediterranean Women's Fund, Sida – Swedish Development and Cooperation Agency, US Embassy in Tirana, UN Women Albania, etc. Since 2016, AWEN has received direct support from Sida¹⁹, following a thorough evaluation that deemed AWEN institutionally strong enough to become a channel for support of its member organisations.

Feedback from member organisations

“The collaboration with AWEN has brought very important changes. It has literally revitalized our NGO. The continuous, timely (technical/ procedural/ managerial) support from the programme staff whenever we met major challenges, the ongoing encouragement to improve our service and enlarge our area of intervention in other municipalities of our region, the assistance in working more closely with other AWEN member NGOs, have been very significant for us. AWEN has played a crucial role for our work, especially during these last years, not just because of the financial support, but also as a mentor, mediator and also booster of our organisation's visibility at national level, advocating for the issues that concern us (and all member organisations) at local level.” **Entela Gjoni, Jona Association, Saranda**

“Thanks to AWEN's intense advocacy work during 2016, 'Me, the Woman' Pogradec has become a local actor/factor and a powerful national voice. AWEN's role for our organisation is obvious in the enlargement of our intervention areas during 2017, result of AWEN's ongoing evaluation and supporting work.” **Eleni Jajcari, Me the Woman, Pogradec.**

Openness of the network

AWEN's member NGOs are some of the most active and long-standing women's NGOs in the country, namely: “Gender Alliance for Development Centre”, Tirana; “Association of Women and Girls with Social Problems”, Durres; “Me, the Woman”, Pogradec; “Agritra Vision”, Peshkopi; “Woman to Woman”, Shkodra; “Woman's Forum”, Elbasan; “The Psycho – Social Centre “Vatra”, Vlora; “Jona” Association, Saranda; “Counseling Line for Girls and Women”, Tirana; “Center for Civic and Legal Initiatives”, Tirana. While initially starting as a Network of eight organisations (2011), the network currently (2018) counts 10 member organisations.

Becoming a member of this semi-closed network requires for interested NGOs to officially apply for membership and the application to be unanimously voted upon by all member organisations of AWEN. The acceptance of new members is based on some *key criteria* such as: the compliance with AWEN's organisational strategy; the interested organisation should constitute an added value to the Network

¹⁹ The **Swedish International Development** Cooperation Agency is a government agency of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. **Sida** is responsible for organisation of the bulk of Sweden's official development assistance to developing countries.

as a whole (expertise, experience; etc.); the applicant's work covers a geographic area not covered/covered sufficiently by the existing members and/or the organisation offers specialized services that are not offered by the existing members; the applying organisation owns expertise in a new topic/area of women's human rights; the applying organisation outreaches to vulnerable girls and women from marginalized groups like women with disabilities, minority groups, etc.

The last two new member organisations that became part of the network have been considered an asset for the network due to their longstanding experience and unique service offered to DV victims. One of them is a key referral agency for DV cases at national level through the National Hotline for DV Cases and the other owns high level expertise in legal issues on DV and women's human rights. Both these services are considered an added value to the network.

Making the services accessible to other organisations

While AWEN in itself does not offer direct services, its member organisations offer support to girls and women in need (with special focus on women victims of DV & trafficking) overall in Albania. The collaboration between member organisations is very strong especially in DV cases of referrals and assistance. *The level of cooperation has intensified throughout the years*, influenced immensely by the regular interventions (capacity building, exchange of experience, joint advocacy initiatives, and common interests for joint programmes) of the AWEN network. One of the key changes over the past years has been in the culture of working together that has led to a much stronger collaborative mindset. There is now greater commitment to cooperate, and more proactive engagement among CSOs.

There is also a good collaboration with other organisations that are not members of the network but work in the same focus area. This collaboration is strong at a local level, but also at a national level, especially on DV case referrals and advocacy initiatives. Joint activities to brainstorm and joint efforts to promote women's human rights in the country are becoming more and more frequent throughout the years. A good example of the latest collaboration among women's NGOs all around the country is the project-based platform '*Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence*', where AWEN acts as a secretariat, while around 45 organisations have joined efforts on this initiative.

Inclusion of women from minority or disadvantaged groups

As stated in Article 4 of the Istanbul Convention: "The implementation of the provisions of this Convention by the Parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status", services (consisting in *psycho-social advice and support, legal support, sheltering, re/integration services (education, professional formation, mediation for employment, housing), etc.*), **are offered for all categories of vulnerable women**, with a special focus on women survivors of VAW and DV.

The services are also offered to women victims of DV from minorities (mostly Roma and Egyptian minorities are present in the country), as well as women with special needs²⁰. However, whenever there is lack of expertise for a specific support service, AWEN member organisations ask for the support of other specialized organisations which offer that specific service (for example, in cases of severe mental health problems or other disabilities). This approach guarantees support for all *women survivors of DV from minorities or disadvantaged groups*. Furthermore, one of the objectives of the network is to enlarge the network with organisations that have specific expertise in addressing issues of women from minorities and women with disabilities, thus to become a network that has expertise and is representative of all women's groups in the Albanian society. This need has been identified by the network's member organisations themselves, especially during these last two years and will be followed up during the upcoming (October 2018) Strategic Planning process for 2019-2022.

Rotation of power structures

AWEN has five staff (project-based) in charge of the day-to-day management of the network, fundraising, capacity development, and joint lobbying and advocacy efforts. The highest decision-making structure of AWEN is the *General Assembly of Member Organisations*, which comes together semi-annually. The General Assembly is called by the Executive Director and the Board of Directors, or at least half of the member organisations. The General Assembly as the highest decision-making structure elects the *Board of Directors*. The Board consists of seven members, four of whom are elected among the founding members of the network or their representatives (also part of the General Assembly), while the other three board members are elected among outstanding social activists in the country (not part of the General Assembly). These three board members are elected by the General Assembly and keep their position for three years, with the possibility of re-election. The internal four board members change in rotation every year. The Board of Directors elects a Chief Director of the board. The Board of Directors comes together semi-annually (or more often if requested by one third of its members) and is the second decision making structure of the Network, followed by the Executive Director.

Compliance of the efforts with the Istanbul Convention

AWEN's contributions in advocacy for women's human rights have been numerous throughout the years. Its position as an advocacy actor has been strengthening from year to year, becoming one of the main voices on women's human rights in the country. In this framework, continuous meetings have been held with relevant public institutions, participation in national consultations relating to implementation of gender equality, submission of input and recommendations for proper implementation of gender equality laws, as well as regarding the necessary improvements in gender policy and legislation. Input and recommendations of network members has been developed, integrated, and consolidated and presented by AWEN to relevant institutions. During 2018, AWEN's Executive Director was elected as one of the three CSO representatives to be part of the National Council for Gender Equality in Albania.

²⁰ Stands for women with disabilities and with mental health issues.

AWEN was one of the few organisations that prepared a shadow report for GREVIO (2017)²¹. *While all the work of AWEN and its members is in line with the standards of the CoE Convention²², among the key efforts we can mention:*

- Capacity building of local actors working with DV cases, as per Article 15 on Training of professionals;
- Working towards extension of services for DV survivors, like the National Hotline for DV Victims, rehabilitation services for perpetrators, as per Article 24 on Telephone helplines and Article 16 on Preventive intervention and treatment programmes;
- Advocacy efforts at national and local level for the opening of emergency shelters in Municipalities and in collaboration with women CSOs, as per Article 23 on Shelters;
- Offering free legal aid/ representation for DV survivors, as per Article 57 on Legal aid;
- Specialist support services, as well as protection and support of DV survivors, independent of the willingness to denounce violence, as per Chapter 4: Protection and support, Article 18/4; Article 20 on General support services; and Article 22 on Specialist support services;
- Advocacy and capacity building initiatives related to sexual violence, in order to enhance efforts in addressing sexual violence in Albania, as per Article 25 on Support for victims of sexual violence;
- National and local level awareness raising campaigns, as per Article 13 – Awareness-raising;
- Conducting a national research on intimate partner violence among adolescents, as per Article 11 on Data collection and research.

Case Study 2: Women's Roma Network „FIRST“, Montenegro

During the year 2000, SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence Niksic, with the aim to empower Roma women and enhance their integration into the local community developed and implemented a programme named “Center for Roma Women in Niksic“. After years of work with Roma women, the programme resulted in 2004 in the establishment of the first Roma women's NGO in Montenegro, named **Center for Roma Initiatives (CRI)**. Over a 12-year period, the organisation implemented projects that involved activities such as organizing workshops, offering legal and psychological counselling, offering medical counselling and services and programs for children. These interventions created substantial social changes amongst women from minority and disadvantaged groups.

Furthermore, within the same programme, in order to identify and encourage Roma and Egyptian women in other Montenegrin cities (in the northern and southern Montenegro, where Roma and Egyptian minorities live), “SOS Hotline Niksic“ continued its work with Roma women in different towns of Montenegro.

²¹ Available at <https://rm.coe.int/report-awen-final-draft-jan-17/1680717e19>

²² For reference, please find in the annex of the report the text of the CoE Convention.

With the ultimate aim of increasing the influence of Roma and Egyptian women throughout Montenegro, these two organisations **decided to unite their efforts and formalize their collaboration through the creation of a network in 2009, the formal Women's Roma Network 'FIRST'** (PRVA in Montenegrin language). This network represents the first network accessible for women from minority and disadvantaged groups in Montenegro. Since 2013, "Center for Roma Initiatives" and Formal Women's Roma Network 'FIRST' have taken over all programme activities of SOS Hotline Niksic, as per exit strategy .

Openness of the network

Women's Roma Network 'FIRST' is formed of activists from all parts of Montenegro. Currently, the network has two activists in Berane, two in Podgorica and four in Niksic (central and north regions of Montenegro), and it is currently expanding both in terms of membership and covered territory. The Statutes of Women's Roma Network 'FIRST' establish that NGOs and individuals can be part of the network if they adhere to the goals and activities defined by their Statutes. The Assembly decides about admitting new members into the network by a majority vote. By signing the application, one becomes a member of the network. All members are registered in the Members' register.

Making the services accessible to other organisations/activists

Regarding cooperation with other organisations, the network cooperates with the organisations whose goals and activities coincide with its own. The network has a Facebook profile and a website through which beneficiaries as well as all other stakeholders can receive information about the work of the Women's Roma Network 'FIRST' and the services that the network provides. Network members, working in the field, are in daily communication with beneficiaries, facilitating their access to the services that the network provides such as support or access to information. Currently the network cooperates with the Center for Roma Initiatives, NGO „Ruza“ from Berane, Montenegrin Women's Lobby, SOS Hotline Niksic, and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights.

Inclusion of women from minority or disadvantaged groups

The network has been created with the aim to assist, protect and empower women from minorities, in this case Roma women and their children/families, by:

- Creating a safe place for women and girls (in rented houses outside of Roma settlements to avoid their isolation, social exclusion and invisibility; creation of an alternative, safe space for women and children to learn, socialize, to freely share and acquire new skills);
- Intensive field-work in the settlements to establish relationships with members of Roma/Egyptian community to reduce resistance towards the programme and to build mutual trust;
- Challenging negative traditions and practices by establishing close links with Roma/Egyptian community;
- Playing a 'mediator' role between the Roma/Egyptian community and state institutions, regarding the improvement of access to education and primary health-care centres, of Roma women and girls and increasing their knowledge on reproductive health issues; helping Roma women to solve complex issues regarding citizenship, migration status, birth certificates, etc. and thus enabling them

to achieve other rights; assisting women-victims of domestic violence to realize their right to be protected by state institutions;

- Creating a database of direct and indirect beneficiaries/clients (women, men, boys and girls) to gather data for advocacy/lobbying purposes.

Rotation of power structures

Structures of the FIRST network are: the Assembly, the President of the network and the president of the Assembly. All decisions are made by public voting, with a majority vote of 50% + one member.

Compliance of efforts with the Istanbul Convention

Work of the network "FIRST" is in line with many articles of the Istanbul Convention, more precisely:

- Article 4 on Fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination
- Article 37 on Forced marriage
- Article 39 on Forced abortion and forced sterilization
- Article 6 on Gender Sensitive Policies
- Article 19 on Information
- Article 20 on General support services
- Article 27 on Reporting
- Article 32 on Civil consequences of forced marriages
- Article 33 on Psychological violence
- Article 34 on Stalking
- Article 35 on Physical violence
- Article 36 on Sexual violence, including rape
- Article 40 on Sexual harassment
- Article 41 on Aiding or abetting and attempt
- Article 42 on Unacceptable justifications for crimes, including crimes committed in the name of so-called "honour crimes"

Main Findings & Recommendations: Features of successful networking identified in the region

The report identified that all networks are accessible to women from minorities and/or disadvantaged groups, by either tailoring their access to services according to the needs of disadvantaged and/or minority groups, or by working with organisations that specifically work with these groups. All networks are proactive in their efforts towards including women from minority and/or disadvantaged groups in their work. In terms of access to services, all women, if survivors of violence, are generally assisted, protected and empowered if they are part of the networks'/organisations' target group. Furthermore, there are also examples of networks that specifically work with one group of women, such as the 'Network of Women with Disabilities' from Bosnia and Herzegovina, a platform created

with the aim of facilitating communication among women with disabilities, as well as raising awareness in society about the issue.

To ensure not only effective support of women from minority women and disadvantaged women's groups, but also their active participation in strategic decision making, they should also be represented in strategic decision-making bodies (such as the board and the strategic planning processes of networks. Their voices represent 'the missing piece' of the puzzle in the fight against violence against women, and enable the provision of improved services that are tailored to specific groups' needs. Whereas some networks/organisations include the support of vulnerable groups in their strategic objectives, others are still working towards this aim and towards making a palpable difference for all women. To make progress in this area, networks should either incorporate the needs of disadvantaged/minority groups in their statutes or incorporate in their statutes that they will collaborate with specialist organisations run 'by and for' minority groups. A positive example is AWEN Network Albania, as one of their objectives in their upcoming strategic plan (2019-2022) is to address the needs of women from minority and disadvantaged groups by aiming to incorporate such organisations in their network.

Empowering certain disadvantaged groups of women through local or regional women's organisations can lead to the **establishment of autonomous specialized women's organisations**, such as the establishment of the first Roma women's NGO in Montenegro. Their main aim is to empower Roma women in Montenegro and facilitate their integration within the wider society. 'SOS Hotline' for Women and Children Victims of Violence Niksic developed and implemented the programme 'Center for Roman Women in Niksic', which resulted in 2004 in the establishment of the first Roma women's NGO in Montenegro, 'Center for Roma Initiatives (CRI)'. Such programmes, emphasize the importance of involving specific groups of women into women's organisations work, due to their specific knowledge and better understanding of the realities minority groups face. Supporting women's voices from minority groups in becoming more visible within the VAW sector and involving them as active partners of change, enables NGOs to offer more tailored support services.

Women's networks/organisations – if including women from minority backgrounds – can also be **hubs of specialist knowledge** about specific disadvantaged groups of women and the experiences/practices of organisations supporting them. They can therefore contribute towards influencing government policy and legislation through lobbying efforts (depending on the local/regional political situation), thus effectively representing the voice of organisations/women from minority backgrounds, that are not strongly visible in the public area. Advocacy and lobbying efforts are most successful when they are undertaken by a group of organisations, activists or a network, as for example was the case when working towards implementing the Istanbul Convention.

Most networks are open in their **membership structure** for women's organisations or women's activists in general. Usually, membership approval is based on some pre-set criteria. Some networks have a semi-closed approach to new membership, based on the aim and purpose of the network, for example when it is project based. The identified networks in WBT usually have member organisations/activists that are spread throughout the country for greater representation and

outreach purposes. This approach is very useful when it comes to addressing the interests of women from different groups. All networks are characterized by a pluralistic decision-making approach when it comes to accepting new members. These decisions are usually taken by the board of directors and general assemblies of the networks together.

The work of a network is more efficient when it has **dedicated and funded staff** carrying out its activities. Usually networks make use of membership fees to raise funds, as they constitute a good income source, in order to complement and reduce dependency on donor funding. Very few networks receive financial support from their respective governments and rely almost entirely on international donors. In some cases, women's networks raise their own funding initiatives such as the Kosovo Women's Network which in 2012 established the fund, 'Kosovo Women's Fund'. It provides small grants for women's organisations lacking access to other resources. This fund is particularly relevant amongst rural and/or minority groups such as: Serbian, Bosnian, Roma Ashkali, Egyptian women and women with disabilities.

As financial support is a crucial aspect of an organisation's stability, there is a **need for governments to allocate appropriate funding for women's non-governmental organisations**, so their initiatives can reach more marginalized people. Appropriate funding should also be allocated to women's organisations working specifically with minority and disadvantaged groups. As Article 8 of the Istanbul Convention highlights, *"...appropriate financial and human resources shall be allocated by states for adequate implementation of integrated policies, measures and programmes to prevent and combat all forms of violence, including to those carried out by non-governmental organisations and civil society"*.

To conclude, **two main observations** can be made from this research:

Firstly, it can be noted that most of the women's organisations/networks present in the Western Balkans and Turkey seek to be accessible to women from minorities and/or disadvantaged. They either tailor their access to services according to the needs of disadvantaged and/or minority groups, or they collaborate with organisations that specifically work with these groups.

Secondly, increased cooperation between women's organisations/networks and organisations specifically supporting women from minority and/or disadvantaged groups can also be noted. Women's network either actively support the establishment of organisations working with disadvantaged and/or minority groups, or include these organisations into their own networks.

Even though improvements can still be made, these two observations are clear signs of women's networks being generally accessible and inclusive with the WBT region.



Civil Society
Strengthening Platform



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Annex 1. Articles from the Istanbul Convention mentioned in this publication

Article 4 on Fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination: The implementation of the provisions of this Convention by the Parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.

Article 6 on Gender Sensitive Policies: Parties shall undertake to include a gender perspective in the implementation and evaluation of the impact of the provisions of this Convention and to promote and effectively implement policies of equality between women and men and the empowerment of women.

Article 11 on Data collection and research: For the purpose of the implementation of this Convention, Parties shall undertake to: (a) collect disaggregated relevant statistical data at regular intervals on cases of all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention; (b) support research in the field of all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention in order to study its root causes and effects, incidences and conviction rates, as well as the efficacy of measures taken to implement this Convention.

Article 13 on Awareness-raising: (1) Parties shall promote or conduct, on a regular basis and at all levels, awareness-raising campaigns or programmes, including in co-operation with national human rights institutions and equality bodies, civil society and non-governmental organisations, especially women's organisations, where appropriate, to increase awareness and understanding among the general public of the different manifestations of all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention, their consequences on children and the need to prevent such violence. (2) Parties shall ensure the wide dissemination among the general public of information on measures available to prevent acts of violence covered by the scope of this Convention.

Article 15 on Training of professionals: (1) Parties shall provide or strengthen appropriate training for the relevant professionals dealing with victims or perpetrators of all acts of violence covered by the scope of this Convention, on the prevention and detection of such violence, equality between women and men, the needs and rights of victims, as well as on how to prevent secondary victimisation. (2) Parties shall encourage that the training referred to in paragraph 1 includes training on co-ordinated multi-agency co-operation to allow for a comprehensive and appropriate handling of referrals in cases of violence covered by the scope of this Convention.

Article 16 on Preventive intervention and treatment programmes: (1) Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or support programmes aimed at teaching perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships with a view to preventing further violence and changing violent behavioural patterns.

Article 18 on Protection and support: The provision of services shall not depend on the victim's willingness to press charges or testify against any perpetrator.

Article 19 on Information: Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that victims receive adequate and timely information on available support services and legal measures in a language they understand.

Article 20 on General support services: (1) Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that victims have access to services facilitating their recovery from violence. These measures should include, when necessary, services such as legal and psychological counselling, financial assistance, housing, education, training and assistance in finding employment.

Article 22 on Specialist support services (2) Parties shall provide or arrange for specialist women's support services to all women victims of violence and their children;

Article 23 on Shelters: Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to provide for the setting-up of appropriate, easily accessible shelters in sufficient numbers to provide safe accommodation for and to reach out pro-actively to victims, especially women and their children.

Article 24 on Telephone helplines: Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up state-wide round- the-clock (24/7) telephone helplines free of charge to provide advice to callers, confidentially or with due regard for their anonymity, in relation to all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention.

Article 25 on Support for victims of sexual violence: Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to provide for the setting up of appropriate, easily accessible rape crisis or sexual violence referral centres for victims in sufficient numbers to provide for medical and forensic examination, trauma support and counselling for victims

Article 27 on Reporting: Parties shall take the necessary measures to encourage any person witness to the commission of acts of violence covered by the scope of this Convention or who has reasonable grounds to believe that such an act may be committed, or that further acts of violence are to be expected, to report this to the competent organisations or authorities.

Article 32 on Civil consequences of forced marriages: Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that marriages concluded under force may be voidable, annulled or dissolved without undue financial or administrative burden placed on the victim.

Article 33 on Psychological violence: Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the intentional conduct of seriously impairing a person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats is criminalised.

Article 34 on Stalking: Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the intentional conduct of repeatedly engaging in threatening conduct directed at another person, causing her or him to fear for her or his safety, is criminalised.

Article 35 on Physical violence: Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the intentional conduct of committing acts of physical violence against another person is criminalised.

Article 36 on Sexual violence, including rape: (1) Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the following intentional conducts are criminalised: (a) engaging in non-

consensual vaginal, anal or oral penetration of a sexual nature of the body of another person with any bodily part or object; (b) engaging in other non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a person; (c) causing another person to engage in non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a third person. (2) Consent must be given voluntarily as the result of the person’s free will assessed in the context of the surrounding circumstances. (3) Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the provisions of paragraph 1 also apply to acts committed against former or current spouses or partners as recognised by internal law.

Article 37 on Forced marriage: (1) Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the intentional conduct of forcing an adult or a child to enter into a marriage is criminalized. (2) Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the intentional conduct of luring an adult or a child to the territory of a Party or State, other than the one she or he resides in, with the purpose of forcing this adult or child to enter into a marriage is criminalized.

Article 39 on Forced abortion and forced sterilization: Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the following intentional conducts are criminalized: a) performing an abortion on a woman without her prior and informed consent; b) performing surgery which has the purpose or effect of terminating a woman’s capacity to naturally reproduce without her prior and informed consent or understanding of the procedure.

Article 40 on Sexual harassment: Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, is subject to criminal or other legal sanction.

Article 41 on Aiding or abetting and attempt: Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to establish as an offence, when committed intentionally, aiding or abetting the commission of the offences established in accordance with Articles 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38.a and 39 of this Convention. (2) Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to establish as offences, when committed intentionally, attempts to commit the offences established in accordance with Articles 35, 36, 37, 38.a and 39 of this Convention.

Article 42 on Unacceptable justifications for crimes, including crimes committed in the name of so-called “honour crimes”: (1) Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that, in criminal proceedings initiated following the commission of any of the acts of violence covered by the scope of this Convention, culture, custom, religion, tradition or so-called “honour” shall not be regarded as justification for such acts. This cover, in particular, claims that the victim has transgressed cultural, religious, social or traditional norms or customs of appropriate behaviour. (2) Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that incitement by any person of a child to commit any of the acts referred to in paragraph 1 shall not diminish the criminal liability of that person for the acts committed.

Article 57 on Legal aid: Parties shall provide for the right to legal assistance and to free legal aid for victims under the conditions provided by their internal law.

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