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Meeting: 1521st meeting (March 2025) (DH)

Item reference: Revised Action Plan (17/01/2025)

Communication from Romania concerning the group of cases Balsan v. Romania (Application No.49645/09), P. v. Romania (Application No. 36049/21) and Buturuga v. Romania (Application No. 56867/15)

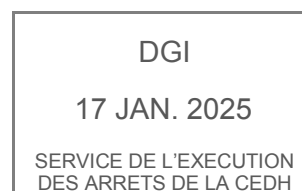
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Réunion : 1521^e réunion (mars 2025) (DH)

Référence du point : Plan d'action mis à jour (17/01/2025)

Communication de la Roumanie concernant le groupe d'affaires Balsan c. Roumanie (requête n° 49645/09), P. c. Roumanie (requête n° 36049/21) et Buturuga c. Roumanie (requête n° 56867/15) (**anglais uniquement**)



L/ 179 / 17 January 2025

4651 R/AG/ 109

8870 R/AG/52

13151 R/AG/82

Revised Action Plan in the cases of

Bălșan v. Romania

(Application no. 49645/09, judgment of 23 May 2017, final on 23 August 2017)

Buturugă v. Romania

(Application no. 56867/15, judgment of 11 February 2020, final on 11 June 2020) and

P. v. Romania

(Application no. 36049/21, judgment of 12 December 2023, final on the same day)

I. Introductory summary of the case

The case of *Bălșan v. Romania* concerns the failure of the investigating, prosecuting and judicial authorities to comply with their positive obligation under Article 3 to protect the applicant from repeated acts of domestic violence inflicted by her then spouse in 2007 and 2008.

The European Court noted that the authorities had not adequately responded to the acts complained of by the applicant, as they found that these acts had been provoked by her, that they were not serious enough to fall within the scope of the criminal law or that they were not supported by evidence. The courts had moreover denied the applicant the services of a court-appointed lawyer because they considered that legal representation for the victim was not necessary in such cases, and all the authorities responsible for the case had failed to consider her requests for protective measures.

The Court also found a violation of Article 14 in conjunction with Article 3, as it considered that the applicant had been a victim of gender-based discrimination. It found that there existed prima facie evidence that in Romania domestic violence mainly affected women and that the general and discriminatory passivity of the authorities had created a climate that was conducive to this phenomenon. It noted that, despite the adoption of a law and a national strategy on preventing and combating domestic violence, the overall unresponsiveness of the judicial system and the impunity enjoyed by aggressors, as found in this case, indicated that there was an insufficient commitment to take appropriate action to address domestic violence.

The *Buturugă v. Romania* case concerns the lack of an effective investigation into the applicant's allegations of domestic violence and of violation of the confidentiality of electronic correspondence by her former husband (violations of Articles 3 and 8).

The European Court found that the national authorities had not addressed the criminal investigation, concluded in 2015, as raising the specific issue of domestic violence, thus failing to provide an appropriate response to the seriousness of the facts complained of by the applicant. The investigation into the acts of violence had been defective and no consideration had been given to the merits of the complaint regarding violation of the confidentiality of correspondence, which was closely linked to the complaint of violence. The Court pointed in this latter respect that cyberbullying is currently recognized as an aspect of violence against women and girls, and that it could take on a variety of forms, including cyber breaches of privacy, intrusion into the victim's computer and the capture, sharing and manipulation of data and images, including private data.

Finally, the *P. v. Romania* case concerns shortcomings in the criminal investigation, terminated in 2023 and having lasted for almost five years, into acts of domestic violence suffered by the applicant and also involving her children, between 2015 and 2018, which deprived her of effective protection against such acts (violation of Article 3 of the Convention).

The Court emphasized the particular diligence required when dealing with complaints of domestic violence and the need to take into account their specific nature, as recognized in the Istanbul Convention, particularly when domestic violence also involves children.

II. Individual measures in relation to the *P. v. Romania* case

In regard to the case of *P. v. Romania*, the Government has inquired to the Prosecutor's Office of Cornetu Court of First Instance as to the current state of any ongoing investigation concerning complaints raised by the applicant.

- In case-file no. 1234/167/P/2024, the *in rem* investigation is ongoing regarding the allegation of the applicant, that on 18 November 2023 around 9 a.m., during the visitation hours with his children, in the presence of her attorney and representatives from the local mayor's office, her former husband stole a backpack belonging to her, containing clothes and food (Article 228 para. (1) of the Criminal Code). The applicant's complaint was registered on 1 March 2024. On 7 March 2024 the prosecutor ordered the beginning of the criminal proceedings for theft. On 15 January 2025 instructions were given by the prosecutor in regard to the manner in which the investigation should be continued.
- In case-file no. 3284/167/P/2023, the *in rem* investigation is ongoing regarding the claim that on 4 June 2023 around 9 a.m. her former husband entered her courtyard without consent and pushed her (Articles 193 para. (1) and 224 para. (1) of the Criminal Code). The applicant's complaint was registered on 4 June 2023 and the prosecutor ordered the beginning of the criminal proceedings on the same day in regard to the two crimes mentioned above. On 15 January 2025 instructions were given by the prosecutor in regard to the manner in which the investigation should be continued.

- In case-file no. 5476/167/P/2022, the *in rem* investigation is ongoing regarding the claim that on 4 June 2022 around 9 a.m. her former husband assaulted her (Article 193 para. (1) of the Criminal Code). The applicant's complaint was registered on 8 August 2022. On the same day the prosecutor ordered the beginning of the criminal proceedings for assault. On 22 April 2024 the investigating authorities reviewed the images provided by the applicant. On 15 January 2025 instructions were given by the prosecutor in regard to the manner in which the investigation should be continued.
- In case-file no. 5281/167/P/2023, the *in rem* investigation is undergoing regarding the claim that on 19 August 2023 around 9 a.m. her former husband assaulted her (Articles 193 para. (1) and 199 para. (1) of the Criminal Code). The events complained of took place at a time when the applicant's former husband was visiting his children, in line with a court's order. At the time, the applicant's former husband and his sister are accused of having assaulted the applicant and her attorney. The applicant's attorney is accused of having assaulted the applicant's former husband and his sister. The prosecutor's Office was notified on the same day. On 15 January 2025 instructions were given by the prosecutor in regard to the manner in which the investigation should be continued.

It is important to mention that, in January 2025, when the latest information presented above were requested from the Prosecutor's Office of Cornetu Court of First Instance, in the letter sent to the authorities, attention was drawn to the importance of respecting the requirements of the Convention and of the ECHR's jurisprudence when investigating domestic violence allegations, with emphasis on the need to solve the cases in a timely manner, without unjustified delays.

Furthermore, the Government was also following developments in the case-file no. 917/87/2024, on the applicant's request to revise the divorce decision no. 32 from 8 January 2021 rendered by Teleorman County Court.

By a request before Teleorman County Court the applicant asked the court to change the decision by which her former husband was allowed to visit their two minor children, so as to prohibit visitation for a period of at least 3 years, claiming he had assaulted them. Furthermore, she asked the courts to declare the dissolution of their marriage due to the exclusive fault of her ex-husband. The applicant claimed the Court's findings in its judgment from 12 December 2023 were sufficient to justify the revision of a civil court decision to which the ECtHR did not at any point refer.

By decision no. 902 of 18 December 2024, for which the reasoning was drafted on 15 January 2025, Teleorman County Court rejected the applicant's request. In its decision, Teleorman County Court noted that the Court's decision referred to a lack of an effective investigation concerning the criminal proceedings. The revision provided for by Article 509 para. (1) point 10 of the Code of Civil Procedure is an extraordinary avenue of appeal that cannot be extended beyond the limits envisioned by law. As such, the court noted that in this case it is not possible to revise a civil decision regarding the issue of divorce based on the findings of the ECtHR regarding the

ineffectiveness of distinct criminal proceedings, although the civil court had also analysed the issue of domestic violence when rendering its judgment.

III. General measures

The following measures were taken following the Government's previous communication regarding the 25 June 2020 Action Plan, submitted in the *Bălșan* case.

A. Legislative measures

According to the information provided by ANES in December 2024, as far as the primary legislation in this field is concerned, it has been revised, adapted and strengthened in order to bring the national law in line with the provisions of the most important European strategic document in this field, namely the Council of Europe's *Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* (the Istanbul Convention).

The Government would like to draw attention to the major legislative reform carried out in 2018. Thus, Law No. 174/2018 substantially amended Law No. 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence, in particular by introducing the Provisional Protection Order (OPP) and the conditions for its implementation, thus ensuring the application of Article 52 of the Istanbul Convention.

The Provisional Protection Order is the main protection instrument prescribed by Law no. 217/2003 and it differs from the protection order (OP), which has been regulated by law since 2012, being an administrative tool that allows the police officer to intervene quickly to protect the victim and the children, as well as to immediately remove the aggressor from the home in situations of imminent danger to the health and safety of the victim of domestic violence, including a prohibition for the aggressor to return for the entire duration of the OPP, even in situations where he is the holder of the property right.

The OPP is valid for 5 days with the possibility for it to be extended until the issuance of the protection order (OP). Also, if the situation so requires, the OPP may order other measures to protect the victim, such as: the reintegration of the victim and her child/children in the shared dwelling, the establishment of a minimal distance which the aggressor must respect from the victim, victim's home, workplace or school and confiscation of keys and/or weapons.

B. Available resources in the field of combatting domestic violence

As regards the specialized social services aimed at preventing and combating domestic violence, ANES stated there are currently 265 such social services, as follows:

- At the national level, a total of 171 services addressing victims (157) and aggressors (14);

- At the local level, there are 84 specialized services – 42 support groups, 42 vocational orientation cabinets and 10 integrated centers for interventions in cases of sexual violence.

Of the 157 centers for victims of domestic violence:

A. 133 residential centers:

- a. 28 emergency centers for protecting victims of domestic violence:

- Local Councils: 6 (Alba-1, Braşov-1, Iaşi-1, Sălaj-1, DGASPC District 3-1, DGASPC District 5-1)

- Accredited private organizations: 6 (Buzău-1, Ilfov-1, Galaţi-1, Mureş-1, Sibiu-1, Timiş-1)

- DGASPCs: 16 (Arges-1, Brasov-1, Covasna-1, Cluj-1, Constanta-1, Dolj-1, Gorj-1, Ialomita-1, Iaşi-1, Mehedinţi-1, Olt-1, Sibiu-1, Vaslui-1, Vâlcea-1, DGASMB-2)

- b. 16 recovery centers for victims of domestic violence

- Local Councils: 5 (Alba-2, Maramureş-1, DGASPC District 5-1, Dâmboviţa-1)

- Accredited private organizations: 5 (Galati-1, Giurgiu-1, Ilfov-1, Sibiu-1, Vrancea-1)

- DGASPCs : 6 (Arad-1, Bacău-1, Buzău-1, Suceava-1, Tulcea-1, Vaslui-1)

- c. 42 sheltered housing for victims of domestic violence;

- d. 47 maternity centers.

B. 23 day-time centers:

- a. Counselling centers for preventing and combating domestic violence: 19

- Local Councils: 5 (Cluj-2, Ialomita-1, Neamt-1, Timis-1)

- Accredited private organizations: 13 (Arges-1, Bistrita-Nasaud-1, Brasov-1, Bucuresti District 1-1, Bucharest Sector 2-2, Bucharest Sector 3-1, Cluj-2, Iaşi-1, Mures-1, Prahova-1, Sibiu-1)

- DGASPC : 1 (Galati-1)

- b. " Information and awareness-raising centers for the prevention and combating of domestic violence: 4

- Local Councils: 3 (Brasov-1, Ialomita-2)

- Accredited private organizations: 1(Bucharest District 2-1)

C. Centers open non-stop: 1 (Information and counselling centers for victims of domestic violence (Helpline) -Accredited private organization – Iasi.

Of the 14 assisting centers for aggressors:

- Local Councils: 5 (Brasov-1, DGASPC District 5-1, DGASPC District 6-1, Maramures-1, Timis-1)

- Accredited private organizations: 1 (Arges-1)

- DGASPCs: 8 (Bacău-1, DGASMB-1, Constanţa-1, Dolj-1, Giurgiu-1, Ialomita-1, Sibiu-1, Timiş-1)

C. Training activities

The Government would like to underline that, according to the Superior Council of Magistrates, raising the awareness level on all forms of discrimination, particularly that targeted towards women and children, as well as addressing recurring social phenomena in the Romanian society, such as domestic violence (including the causes, the profile of the victim and that of the aggressor) is considered a priority when training magistrates. The training sessions are aimed at empowering the magistrates to identify the most efficient manner in which the judicial activities could act, to promote cooperation and to manage the domestic violence instances so as to protect the victims, as well as to identify and unify divergent solutions rendered by courts and prosecutors.

As regard to the **initial training of magistrates**, domestic violence is addressed from a criminal perspective within the courses on Family Law, Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure Law, as well as in the subject of the ECtHR's case-law. **The Government would like to underline that the case of *Bălșan versus Romania* is included in the curriculum of this subject.** The courses address the issue of the provisional protection order, the classic protection order and the contestation against such orders.

Domestic violence is also addressed during seminars on tangential topics, such as the divorce or parental authority (violence between spouses as a justification for ordering the exercise of the parental authority exclusively by one of them) and domestic violence from a psychological perspective.

In regard to the **continuous professional training of magistrates**, the cases of *Buturugă*, *Bălșan* and *P. v. Romania* have also added to the curriculum of the ECtHR case-law's subject of one of the programs aimed at consolidating the capabilities of the judicial system. Furthermore, the Court's other case-law on Articles 3 and 8 of the Convention was also addressed in the context of domestic violence. In total, between 2017-2024, 34 such training sessions on the issue of human rights were organized. Furthermore, during the same period, the National Institute of Magistracy has organized 20 periodical training sessions for judges and prosecutors, which address themes like domestic violence and gender-based violence.

Regarding **initial training of police officers**, the Government would like to note that the training curricula of the police schools and the police academy aim at familiarizing students with different forms of domestic violence, including cyberviolence, allowing them to recognize and identify the causes, as well as the measures necessary in order to protect victims. Therefore, the "domestic violence" discipline was introduced in order to instruct the students on the particularities of each of these offences, as provided for by law.

The acting police officers are also subject to **continuous professional training** on the subject of domestic violence, which also takes place in specialized centers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The training addresses the following topics: *preventing gender-based violence, managing the complaints of domestic violence, the issuing and enforcement of provisional protection orders, the*

monitoring of the provisional, as well as the classic protection order, safeguarding human rights, respecting diversity, combating torture and inhumane treatments, addressing hate crimes etc.

Training sessions for professionals involved in the justice system were also organized by the National Agency for Equality of Chances between Men and Women (“ANES”), as part of the **“VioGen RoJust” Program**, alongside four non-governmental organizations with a long history in preventing and combating domestic violence and respecting human rights – FILIA Center, TRANSCENA Association, ANAIS Association and GRADO Association.

This project aimed at ensuring the effective implementation of the Council of Europe standards regarding human rights by improving protection measures against domestic violence, as well as consolidating the capacities of the Romanian authorities, in order to ensure adequate intervention and an appropriate legal framework for protecting victims and preventing discrimination.

The activities included improving the implementation and execution of the Court’s judgment, as well as of other country-specific recommendations of Council of Europe bodies concerning abuse, domestic violence and gender-based violence.

According to ANES, this project has generated long term positive effects, systematically contributing to an increased understanding of the profile of victims of domestic and gender-based violence, their needs, and how to address them in order to avoid all forms of discrimination and to increase confidence in the administration of justice, as a corollary of respect for women's rights, an essential part of women's fundamental human rights.

This project has created a mechanism for network of specialists (Victim Support Assistants), who provide, guidance and counseling, in order to empower victims during the proceedings for issuing whilst the protection orders by the police. The mechanism is currently being piloted at the level of two police stations (Sections nos. 4 and 7 in Bucharest).

The project also helped with the creation of a mechanism for the establishment **of a network of specialists in the field of gender non-discrimination**, which could supply advisory opinions to the courts on gender on non-discrimination against women, avoiding victimization/revictimization during hearings and/or criminal investigations and throughout the legal. This mechanism is currently being piloted at the level of three courts (Courts of First Instance of Bucharest Districts 3 and 6 and Galati First Instance Court).

Furthermore, between June 2022 – September 2023, the project included a nation-wide public-awareness campaign targeted at the civil society, as well as professionals from the justice system and fields tangential to prevention and combating domestic violence. Thus, 50 spots were aired on TV, 50 on radio, banners were displayed in 6 cities (București, Giurgiu, Arad, Oradea, Piatra-Neamț and Suceava) and 70 total posts were published on the social-media platforms of the FILIA Center (Facebook, Instagram and TikTok), reaching a total of 840.000 users. Finally, between May-November 2023, 15 virtual events (for each court of appeal) were organized nationwide, reuniting professionals such as psychologists, attorneys, judges, academic experts and members of

the child protection services, with the purpose of raising the authorities' capacity of enforcing the recommendations resulted from the Court's case-law, as well as other country-specific recommendations.

The project helped with the continuous professional training of about 4000 police officers, 350 social workers, 200 judges, 200 prosecutors, prosecutors legal counselors and other professionals.

The project also allowed for the creation of a Tripartite Dialogue Mechanism, consisting of members of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence, the National Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (CONES) and the County Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (COJES).

Finally, a survey was elaborated on the matter of compliance with ECtHR's judgments and recommendations of the Council of Europe on the rights of victims of gender-based violence, launched on 22 November 2023.

D. Public awareness efforts

The General Inspectorate of Romanian Police ("IGPR") has organized a number of preventative campaigns in the hopes of raising public awareness of the resources available to victims of domestic violence.

IGPR has sent information of three such campaigns, one of which is specifically targeted at protecting Ukrainian refugees, which face an additional risk of domestic violence.

Since 2020, another campaign targets the population of rural, as well as urban areas, informing potential victims and professionals about a phone application, updated yearly, which reunites various available resources (in Romanian, Hungarian and English). The application offers information about services available to prevent and combat human trafficking, stereotypes about domestic violence, legal provisions of which victims can make use (such as the protection order or the provisional protection order), as well as questionnaires that people are invited to fill in in order to ascertain the safety of a relationship and measures that can be undertaken to raise online safety.

ANES has also provided some important information on this topic.

The project **Support for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Romania**, implemented by ANES through the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 under the "Justice" program, numerous information and awareness-raising campaigns have been organized.

Concerning the domestic violence phenomenon:

- A national information and awareness raising campaign on changing the perspective on gender-based violence and gender equality attitudes among pupils and educators, as well

as among the teachers as well as among the Roma minority. The first component of this campaign targeted raising the level of awareness among students and educators on the negative effects of gender stereotypes, with a focus on gender-based violence, which took place in 23 high schools and 8 universities of the 8 regions of the country, reaching over 10,100 students and educators. Furthermore, 4 regional debate events were organized, attended by 216 representatives of educational institutions of different counties. The second component aimed at raising the national public-awareness level of the Romanian society on the issues Roma women face. This component targeted a group of 20,000 people and directly addressed Roma women, representatives of Roma communities, representatives of local authorities and professionals with a responsible for Roma issues within the 8 regions of Romania. The campaign included broadcasting 1072 clips at prime time television, as well as 1000 radio spots in order to inform the public about the kinds of discrimination Roma women faced; disseminating informative materials, including in the Romani language, addressing the Roma community, as well as responsible public authorities; organizing 21 nation-wide seminar, 4 debates and 2 conferences on the topic.

- The VENUS Project – together for a safe life!, a national campaign was organized to raise awareness for victims of domestic violence and professionals within the central and local public administration on preventing and combating domestic violence in the light of new legislative regulations. Within the framework of the campaign, 8 regional information and awareness-raising seminars were organized from September to August 2023 for specialists and professionals of local public authorities from all regions of the country, on the support measures for victims of domestic violence developed within the project, as well on the new legislative provisions in the field of prevention and combating domestic violence.
- To mark the 16 days of activism against violence against women, between 25 November and 10 December (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the International Human Rights Day) representatives of ANES and the 42 partners of the *YENUS - Together for a Life in Safety!* have organized, both in 2022 and in 2023, a series of events and activities, among which:
 - the illumination of emblematic buildings in Bucharest and other cities in the color orange, which is the color of the fight against violence against women;
 - the display in orange of the home pages on the ANES website and the websites of public institutions, the participation of ANES representatives in radio and TV broadcasts with the aim of disseminating useful information on accessing social services and supporting resources and protections for victims of domestic violence
 - issuing a press releases on the International Day for Combating Violence against Women and on the significance of the 16 Days Campaign the joint meeting of two inter-institutional bodies set up at ANES level, namely the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence and the Support and Monitoring Committee of the POCU

465/4/4/128038 project "VENUS - Together for a Safe Life!". The scale and diversity of the activities carried out, as mentioned above, have contributed to raising the level of awareness among the population in order to understand the serious consequences of domestic violence and to reduce the risk factors leading to victimization, as well as on the existing domestic institutional and legislative framework for the protection of victims and how to access specialized social services for preventing and combating domestic violence.

E. Administrative measures

Starting May 2023, a working group was instituted within ANES, aiming to ensure the national legislation was brought in line with the Istanbul Convention and that recommendations issued by the GreVio country experts were being applied. This group reunited experts from different authorities which play a role in preventing and combating domestic violence, notably: the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, representatives of the prosecutors, the Superior Council of Magistracy, the Ombudsman's Office, IGPR, child protection services, the Romanian Bar Association, Romanian Psychologists' Association, National Center for Mental Health and Combatting Drugs, academic experts and scientific researchers, as well as experts from NGOs. The working group is tasked with identifying suggestions for the amendment of Law no. 217/2003 for the prevention and combatting of domestic violence and of the Ordinance no. 146/2578/2018 regarding ways to manage the cases of domestic violence by police officers.

Currently, the working group is planning:

- To regulate new forms of abuse against women;
- To insert the gender perspective into the social services system and into the specialized systems aimed at protecting domestic violence victims;
- Take measures to improve the issuing of provisional protection orders
- regulating and diversifying social services for offenders by introducing new services providing accommodation as well as counseling during the period of validity of the provisional protection order and the protection order, so as to ensure a higher level of safety for the victim and improving the possibility of monitoring the offender
- increasing the coordinating role at the state level to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, in particular by harmonizing and monitoring the implementation of local plans for addressing domestic violence and violence against women and by setting up institutionalized structures for coordination and cooperation tailored to the specific needs of victims of rape and sexual violence, forced marriage, stalking and sexual harassment

- establishing the percentage of financing of public and private social services in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence from the state budget.
- the collection of administrative data on the different forms of violence against women in order to give an overview of the phenomenon.
- ensuring systematic and compulsory initial and continuous training on prevention and detection of all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, in particular law enforcement, health and judicial personnel.

In order to support national efforts focused on bringing the domestic legal framework in line with provisions of the Istanbul Convention, between 2019 and 2023, ANES implemented the VENUS project - together for a safer life. ANES has developed measures centered on an integrated and unified approach to social, socio-professional and vocational training services for victims of domestic violence at national level. Through this project, 126 new free specialized social services have been created nationwide, aimed at preventing and combating domestic violence, to ensure

victims an independent life. These included an integrated network of 42 sheltered housing units for victims of domestic violence, one sheltered housing set up in each county with the aim of ensuring the transfer to living independently. Furthermore, 42 psychological support groups operating alongside sheltered housing and 42 vocational counseling centers were created, helping over 4000 people since their establishment in 2023.

Another project developed and implemented by ANES between January 2019 and April 2024 was in support of the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Romania. This represented a strategic action aimed at supporting the Romanian authorities to take coordinated action in addressing the challenges posed by the implementation of the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.

Thus, by providing the necessary support to institutions and local authorities to implement provisions of the Convention, the main objective was to reduce domestic violence and other forms of violence against women.

Ten integrated centers for victims of sexual violence were set up under Art. 25 of the Istanbul Convention within emergency hospitals in the cities of Bucharest, Timișoara, Targu-Mureș, Craiova, Sibiu, Bacău, Constanța, Slobozia, Piatra Neamț and Satu Mare.

At the same time, through the project *Support for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention* 8 centers for the counseling of aggressors have been set up in Romania, operating within DGASPCs Constanța, Sibiu, Timiș, Dolj, Giurgiu, Bacău, Ialomița and Bucharest District 6.

Thus, at national level there are currently 15 centers operating for counseling of aggressors in situations of domestic violence.

Another note-worthy initiative was *Project VERA - Positive change through integrated action in difficult times*, funded by from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, under the Justice program, managed by the Ministry of Justice and implemented by ANES between July 2022 - April 2024.

The objective of this program was to improve and adapt the response capacity of central and local public authorities in order to provide better and adequate support to victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence by training the coordinators of mobile teams for emergency intervention in cases of domestic violence, training specialists in the domestic violence departments of the DGASPCs and providing legal counseling to victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence, facilitating access to justice and legal information.

The project's activities were centered on strengthening local inter-institutional mechanisms in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence and gender-based violence, as follows:

- improving the response capacity of inter-agency mechanisms for emergency intervention in cases of domestic violence, at community level (mobile teams) by training mobile team coordinators;
- improving institutional capacity at DGASPC level by training specialists in domestic violence departments within these institutions and providing counseling for these victims;
- creating a barometer in the field of domestic and gender-based violence, focusing on developments, practices and trends at the county level, in particular in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

F. Measures for addressing situations when crimes were committed in the presence of children (in light of the ECHR's findings in the case of *P. cv. Romania*)

From a legal perspective, the victims of domestic violence hold a special status, enshrined into the Code of Criminal Procedure, which gives them certain procedural rights aimed at supporting them (Articles 113 para. (2), 126-127 of the Code of Criminal Procedure). Legislative measures were taken to prevent such acts in the future. On top of being entitled to request free judicial assistance, they share the same rights throughout the criminal proceedings as protected witnesses.

As presented above, in order to ensure minor victims are not subjected to revictimization during the judicial proceedings, the authorities have implemented numerous training programs, aimed at familiarizing the members of the DGASPCs, who are uniquely positioned and tasked with helping minors, on the available resources and the standards imposed by the Istanbul Convention.

G. Measures for addressing cyberviolence in the context of domestic violence (in light of the ECHR's findings in the case of *Buturugă cv. Romania*)

The most important progress registered so far in protecting victims of cyberviolence in the adoption of *Law no. 26 from 28 February 2024 on the protection order*. According to Article 1 of

this law, *any act of online harassment, online hate messages, online stalking, online threats, non-consensual posting of intimate information and graphic content, unlawful access to private communications and data, and any other form of misuse of information and communication technology to humiliate, frighten, silence the victim* are all considered to be acts of violence and can lead to the issuing of a protection order or the provisional protection order.

Another important component of the protection of victims in the **initial training of police officers**, which specifically addresses this issue.

H. Statistics regarding domestic violence

The following statistics were provided by IGPR in December 2024:

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (first 11 months)
No. of provisional protection orders issued	-	-	7986	8393	11047	12972	13231	12234
Measures ordered by the provisional protection order:	-	-	-	-	-	20618	20584	19479
-mandating that the aggressor wear an electronic monitoring device	-	-	-	-	-	114	335	856
No. of protection orders issued	2894	3775	7899	8210	10336	11082	11887	12169
Measures ordered by the protection order:	-	-	-	-	-	23314	24670	25361
- mandating that the aggressor wear an electronic monitoring device	-	-	-	-	-	70	268	722

Conclusions

With regard to individual measures, the Government is of the opinion that, in light of the latest updates in the case of *P. v. Romania*, no further individual measures are required in any of the three cases in the *Bălșan* group.

On the subject of general measures, the Government respectfully draw the Committee's attention to the progress achieved with regard to the general measures required in this group of cases. Finally, the Government will continue to inform the Committee on any relevant developments in these cases.