



ROMANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU agenda (January -June 2019

In the exercise of the **PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU**, in the field of equality of chances between women and men, Romania has assumed 3 major priorities, as follows:

1. Increasing the economic independence of women by reducing gender discrimination in the business sector and the difference regarding the labor market participation from the point of view of gender equality. In this regard, we have in mind the following aspects:

- Improve the occupational structure of labor market participation for rural women and vulnerable groups.
- Supporting the start-up initiatives and development of private economic structures set -up by women in rural areas.
- Reduce gender discrimination in the business sector .

The current government assumes that gender equality is a priority area, which for the first time included in the social model proposed through the Governance Program a distinct chapter dedicated to the gender perspective called "Respect and dignity for women".

It includes specific objectives and, for their achievement, proposes the implementation of measures involving local government, civil society and specific partnerships.

Another priority is,

2. Preventing and combating domestic violence and emergency protection measures to protect and support victims.

In this regard, we are concentrated on the general interest of the EU Member States in implementing the emergency protection measures imposed by the provisions of the Istanbul Convention at EU level by empowering all decision makers.

Romania is the 14th state which ratified the Istanbul Convention by Law 30/2016, and since the, the harmonization of domestic legislation with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention was one of the Romanian Government's priorities, being the premise to implement the adequate measures in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence and violence against women;

The third priority of the Romanian PRES is:

3. Combating gender pay gap, with particular emphasis on the Commission's initiative on Action Plan 2017-2019 on tackling the pay gap between women and men.



At the national level - Due to the policies supported and implemented by the Government, the average hourly wage for women is only 5.2% lower than for men. With this percentage, Romania is ranked first in the EU-28 ranking. According to the latest data provided by Eurostat, the average hourly wage for women in the EU 28 is 16.2% lower than for men.

During the PRES RO 2019 in the area of gender equality, the following specific events are planned:

1. The High Level Group meeting on Gender Mainstreaming was held in February 18-19, 2019, Bucharest.
2. The Committee on the Status of Women (CSW 63) was held during 11 to 22 March 2019, at the UN headquarters in New York (With this occasion, PRES RO sustained the Statement on behalf of the European Union and organizing a serie of side events with speccific themes).
3. High Level International Conference on "Modern Women's Condition- Between Empowerment, Leadership and Gender Discrimination" will be organised during 29-30 May 2019, Bucharest.
4. High Level International Conference "Towards a Europe free from violence against women and girls - The Istanbul Convention creating a new horizon and a paradigm change for all stakeholders!" will be organised during 4-6 june in Bucharest.

We would like to mention some aspects regarding the current situation of Legislative and non-legislative files

Regarding the non-legislative dossier- EU Accession to the Convention of Europe on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence "ISTANBUL CONVENTION":

The Romanian Government of Romania made dilligences and discussed with representatives of the EU Member States in order to create a positive impact, and at the same time the appropriate condition for raising awareness regarding the importance of the political engagement on preventing and combating domestic violence and continuing the steps needed for EU accession to the Istanbul Convention.

In this respect, Romania is proposing to open new opportunities for dialog and cooperation with the purpose to assure a common understanding of golden rules set- up through the Convention, by organizing the *High Level Conference Towards a Europe free from violence against women*



and girls - The Istanbul Convention creating a new horizon took place in Bucharest, June 4-6, 2019.

PRES RO supported the importance of respecting gender equality and combating all forms of domestic violence and gender violence, which are priorities both of the European and international agenda and reaffirmed the commitment of the Romanian Government to continue the implementation of the Istanbul Convention provisions and to support the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention.

Concerning the Proposal for the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Strengthening gender balance among non-executive directors of listed companies "WOMEN ON BOARD" - Legislative dossier:

Within the PRES RO, discussions continue on the proposal for a Directive on improving gender balance among non-executive directors of listed companies.

As far as the promotion of women in decision-making positions and leadership boards is concerned, we aim to increase the representation of women in the boards of companies listed on the Romanian stock exchange, as at this moment the percentage is only 11% compared to 25, 3% EU average.

From this perspective, the Romanian Government is working to improve the occupational structure to ensure equal opportunities for women's economic and political empowerment, including access to and control over economic, productive, equal pay, and participation in the decision-making process.

- Regarding the gender pay gap issue, The Final Draft Conclusions - "Gender pay gap" - will be presented by the Romanian Minister for Labour and Social Justice at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and the Consumer Affairs Council meeting in June 2019 on the basis of a "RESEARCH NOTE" prepared by the European Institute for Gender Equality.

Thus, will be present a set of Conclusions on measures to be taken at Member State level to combat gender pay gaps based on past work and the political commitments expressed by the Council, the European Parliament, the Commission and relevant stakeholders in this area.

The EU Action Plan 2017-2019 on tackling the gender pay gap adopted by the European Commission focused on specific measures to tackle the root causes of the gender pay gap, including gender segregation at work and work unpaid households, as well as measures to raise awareness and highlight inequalities and stereotypes.



Given the priority focused on the eliminating of the gender pay gap, Romania will organize a High Level Conference, under the auspices of the Prime Minister of Romania, entitled "The Condition of Modern Women - Between Empowerment, Leadership and Discrimination by gender" between 29 and 30 May 2019 in Bucharest."

The commitment of the Romanian Government to implement the Istanbul Convention provision is emphasized through several ongoing major national projects in the field:

- The High Level International Conference "Towards a Europe free from violence against women and girls - The Istanbul Convention creating a new horizon and a paradigm change for all stakeholders!" that will be organised under the PRES RO 2019, during 4-6 June in Bucharest represents the expression of the very good cooperation with the CoE and the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security representatives, within the EEA and Norwegian Funds.
- Also Romania implements through the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, the predefined project "Support for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Romania. The main objective of this project is to set-up a number of 8 centers for perpetrators and 10 rape crisis centers and to develop different specific procedures and methodologies for specialists in the field.
- With the European funds, Romania implements the national project "Venus - Together for a life in security!". The main objective of the project is to develop, in partnership with the local authorities, a national innovative network of 42 protected houses and complementary services like 42 support groups and 42 vocational cabinets. In addition was elaborated a draft of a Government Decision regarding the approval of the National Programme for the Protection of the Domestic Violence Victims, that will be the base for the project implementation.