Guaranteeing equal access of women to justice

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Guaranteeing women’s equal access to justice

- short history -

Feasibility study (2012-2013)

Hearing (women victims of violence, 2013)

Seminar (gaps in data and research, 2014)


With UN Women: Framework for measuring A2J, including women’s (indicators), 2016

Regional projects to improve women’s access to justice in ARM, AZE, BY, GEO, MD, UA (2015-2021)
Compilation of good practices from Member States

- Available and accessible information
- Free counselling and legal assistance
- Specialised centres/courts/prosecutors/police/social workers
- Access to legal aid
- Training for the judiciary
- Support litigation in discrimination cases (maternity-related, sexual harassment..)
- Data collection + access to relevant case-law
Cooperation Projects strategic relevance

CoE Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023)
Strategic Objective 3: Ensure equal access of women to justice

CoE Plan of Action on Strengthening Judicial Independence and Impartiality (2016)

EU Deliverables for Eastern Partnership Countries (deliverables 2 and 10)

CoE Action Plans with all the six Eastern Partnership Countries

UN SDG
Projects objectives

- **Identify and support removal** of obstacles to women’s access to justice in the Eastern Partnership countries
- **Improve gender-responsiveness of the justice systems** in the Eastern Partnership countries including in cases of violence against women
- **Increase application of CoE standards among justice sector professionals**, especially the Istanbul Convention and the European Court of Human Rights
- Contributes towards the Eastern Partnership countries **ratification of the Istanbul Convention**.
- **Enhanced regional dialogue and exchange** among national authorities, national training institutions and legal professionals on improving women’s access to justice and the ratification of Istanbul Convention
Results of the project

Country studies on Barriers, Remedies and Good Practices for Women’s Access to Justice

Training Manual Women’s Access to Justice for legal practitioners and 4 country specific chapters

Online e-learning course on HELP Women’s Access to Justice

Factsheet on Women’s Access to Justice: a guide for legal practitioners

Mentoring Programme for legal practitioners

Translations of tools for legal professionals
Legal & institutional barriers

- Discriminatory legal frameworks
- Gender insensitive interpretation or implementation of the law
- Ineffective or problematic laws and procedures
- Gender stereotyping and gender bias in the legal system

Cultural & social barriers

- Women are not aware of their legal rights or procedures to protect their rights
- Women lack financial resources
- Unequal distribution of household duties/ gender roles
- Gender stereotypes and cultural attitudes
Preliminary observations on the impact of Covid 19 on women’s access to justice

1. WAJ is a means of implementation of women’s rights
2. WAJ is central to sustaining peace and the rule of law
3. WAJ contributes to the fight against impunity towards women
4. WAJ combats poverty and exclusion
5. WAJ protects from economic exploitation and abuse
Lessons learned

Integrate a gender equality perspective in the justice system as a whole: from reporting to the execution of judgments...including data collection!

Improve sex-disaggregated data on A2J

Tackle multiple/intersectional discrimination

Identify, analyse, report and address judicial stereotyping

Facilitate access to legal info + aid for women

Train judges, prosecutors, police, lawyers...

Enforce existing standards (int’l/reg./nat.)

Integrate
Future Plans

- Enhanced capacity building with a focus on the legal sector
- Continuous efforts towards ratification of the Istanbul Convention
- Fostering exchanges among relevant stakeholders on advancing gender equality
- Strengthening structures for continuity and sustainability
- Advancing an interdisciplinary human rights approach to women’s access to justice
THANK YOU!

“Can you be more specific?”