



Violence against
women in Romania



Introductory statistics:

- It is estimated that in **Romania**, 30 % of **women** have experienced **violence**, which is about the same as in the EU overall. The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the cost of intimate partner **violence against women in Romania** could amount to EUR 4.3 billion per year.

Gender-based violence:

- Gender-based violence issues in Romania are primarily related to domestic violence and human trafficking.
- In 2017, the European Court of Human Rights expressed concerns regarding the response of Romania to domestic violence cases.
- Official statistics suggest most Romanians think domestic violence is normal, with 60% of Romanians seeing it as justified, in certain circumstances.
- These kinds of attitudes, which were even more deeply entrenched during the period of communist rule, are slowly beginning to shift and the government has adopted new laws to combat such abuse. However, there remains problems.

Violence and the Romanian police.

- Only 50% of the Romania population say they trust the police. The European Institute for Gender Equality say that when people trust the justice institutions, disclosure of domestic violence incidences are higher.
- As previously stated 30% of Romanians have experienced domestic violence, Additionally, 32% of women are estimated to have experienced sexual harassment.



European Court of Human Rights + Romania.

- IN 2017 Romania has been criticised over its lack of commitment to tackling domestic violence in a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights.
- The court fined the country after it failed to hold to account a man who attacked his wife eight times.
- Officials went so far as to accuse the victim, Angelica Balșan, of provoking the assaults, the court noted.
- Official statistics suggest most Romanians think domestic violence is normal, it said.
- But "the overall unresponsiveness of the judicial system and the impunity enjoyed by aggressors, as found in Ms Balșan's case, indicated that there had been insufficient commitment" to enforcing them, the court noted.
- It found Romania had violated articles of the European Convention on Human Rights prohibiting inhuman and degrading treatment and discrimination based on gender.



NGO Action:

- The network for preventing and countering violence against women, consisting in several NGOs, has asked Interior minister Marcel Vela in an open letter today to take urgent actions in this area after the recent cases of violence against women.
- The one of the 17yo girl set on fire by a man sentenced to life and released on parole and the case of vlogger Colo, after which the young woman who filed a complaint against him had been receiving threats.
- At the same time, female members of FILIA, an NGO who filed a criminal complaint, have also received threat.


- The NGOs ask that those directly involved in the violence cases to be held accountable and also urged for raising awareness campaigns among citizens.
- ***“The widespread cases of violence in the society prove the urgency these measures must be adopted by the Government”***, reads an open letter.
- The network shows that one in four women in Romania is physically or sexually abused by her partner at least one in a lifetime and that last year (2019) there were around 25,000 cases of hitting and other domestic violence cases, with most of the aggressors being men (91%) and most of the victims being women (70%). The same survey reveals that more than a half of Romanians (55%) considers rape justified in certain circumstances, for instance amid alcohol consumption or because a woman wears “provocative clothes”.
- ***“We ask that laws on monitoring aggressors by electronic devices to be adopted at once,”*** the NGOs also asked, reminding the case of a woman in Chitila, killed by her partner this year (2020), despite the protection order against him.
- The activists also asked for the permanent training of the Interior Ministry staff that is working with case of violence against women who are victims or survivors, in order to counter prejudices related to the women’s ethnicity, social statute, religion or sexual orientation.
- ***“Moreover, we also endorsing the establishment of a mixed woman-man police squads to handle these cases, considering the existing conservative attitudes in the Romanian society and implicitly, also among the experts handling domestic violence cases”***, the documents further says.
- According to Pew Research, 2017, 72% of the Romanians consider that a wife must obey to her husband, while the 2018 Gender Barometer revealed that 70% of the Romanians consider the man to be the head of the family.



Violence against women today.

- There is much dissatisfaction with the way in which the issue of violence against women and children was left out of the priority during the pandemic, the victims finding it almost impossible to receive help from the Romanian Police or shelter in quarantined social services.
- They requested to re-prioritize the fight against violence against women and children.

- This past week (2nd July 2020) a new law was passed, which imposes severe restrictions on what Romanian children can be taught about relating to equality between women and men at school, and what subject's university professors can discuss with their students.
- The law makes specific reference to “gender ideology”, which can no longer be broached in any educational institution. One of the law's initiators, Senator Cristian Lungu, says that it forbids the separation of the concepts of “sex” and “gender”.
- The amendment would ban teachers, school counsellors, academics, doctors, social workers, and non-governmental organisations from discussing topics related to gender equality. Romania's leading universities and coalitions of NGOs have been quick to condemn the legislation, saying that it threatens academic freedom.
- Both pieces of legislation now need to be signed off by the country's president, Klaus Iohannis, and many organisations are lobbying hard for the president to send them back to parliament.



What help is currently available in Romania?

- The five sexual assault services in Romania are all run by NGOs and are part of the Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence network.
- These services provide information, psychological counselling and legal assistance. For those experiencing domestic violence, Romania has 73 shelters with 828 beds.
- Romania has a national helpline for victims of family violence that is free of charge (0800 500 333) and available 24/7, which provides advice and referral. (Women seeking crisis services should call the police.)