
INTERNATIONAL REGULATION FRAMEWORK REGARDING THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN¹

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***Abstract:** The paper overviews international conventions focused on eliminating the discrimination of women. Particular attention is paid on the progresses registered by Romania in this respect. The existing institutional building and legislative framework support implementation of the assumed responsibilities. The monitoring and evaluation of women's situation in Romania is still lacking, as the last progress report was submitted in 2003. Political long-term commitment in this direction could improve the current situation especially from the women's state of affaires monitoring point of view.*

***Keywords:** women, discrimination, discrimination against women, CEDAW*

1. Introduction

The specialised literature uses a series of terms regarding differences between men and women (sex or gender discrimination, equality of chances or of treatment) or differences between human beings (equal opportunities). The situations of woman's vulnerability are complementary included but failure to use them in consensus with the unanimously accepted definitions of the international conventions (discrimination) or lacking definition in such documents (equality) create both ambiguities and the perception of pertaining to a general panacea concept for solving the issues that women face.

Regarding sex, it is one of the longest surviving concepts, used with priority in pointing out the biological differences between men and women. Because the concept has a

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long-established meaning as presented above, the implementation of the “gender” term was welcomed as it is “*a symbolic system by which bodies enter into sociality (...) referring to the way in which a certain culture defines these differences, to the distinctions in the way women and men live their lives and to the manner in which individuals see their and others’ lives in the terms of the woman-man dichotomy*” (Grünberg, 2011, p. 209).

The efforts for promoting equality between men and women imposed the understanding, assuming and responsibility assumption of actions corresponding to promoting specific measures. Equality means more than promoting a way of equal behaviour towards men and women. It became “*a basic principle and the end scope in the fight for acknowledging humane rights for women*” (Holmström and Karlbrink, 2001, p. 434). In acknowledging the actuality of this topic, in 2007, was instituted the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

Based on these considerations, the article reviews the main definitions and regulations reflected by international conventions to which Romania is signatory party. The purpose of such an approach is to contribute to clarifying terms, highlighting progress, and identifying the position of our country, in relation to the transposition of measures that contribute in combating women discrimination.

2. International conventions regarding the fight against discrimination

The United Nations Organisation (UN) is the initiator of the main international regulations with impact on the protection of women. Beginning with the International Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)¹, the acts reflecting world interest about women are: the Convention on Political Rights of Women (20 December 1952)², The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (18 December 1979)³ and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (20 December 1993)⁴. Other UN conventions targeting other vulnerable groups, but with direct impact on women⁵ are:

- Declaration of the Rights of the Child (20 November 1959)
- Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (7 November 1967)
- Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (20 December 1971)

¹ Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, Resolution 217 (III) of 10 December 1948.

² Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, Resolution 640 (VII) of 20 Decembrie 1952. The resolution was enforced on 7 July 1954

³ Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, Resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979. The resolution was enforced on 3 September 1981

⁴ Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, Resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993.

⁵ Convention.

- Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (9 December 1975)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (20 November 1989)
- Proclamation on Ageing (16 October 1992)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (6 October 1999)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, children prostitution and child pornography (25 May 2000)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (25 May 2000)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (13 December 2006)¹ (Stănescu, 2013, p. 65)

A series of conventions and protocols are dedicated to the general situations of vulnerability (torture, discrimination, human trafficking) that might affect human beings irrespective of their sex. From among these we mention the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted in 1965 and ratified by Romania on 15 September 1970.

From the viewpoint of focusing national efforts for solving the issues faced by vulnerable groups, the situation of women represented an absolute priority (Stănescu, 2013, p. 66) as can be seen from the Table hereunder:

Table 1. Chronological Table about the time allotted between the adoption of some UN declarations and conventions regarding children, women, disabled persons and elderly

Nr.	Issue	Declaration ²	Convention ³	Number of years
1.	Child	1959	1989, 2000 (optional protocol)	30
2.	Women – political rights	1948	1952	4
3.	Women - discrimination	1967	1979, 1999 (optional protocol)	12
4.	Women - violence	1993	-	-
5.	Person with disabilities	1971	2006	35
6.	Elderly	1992	-	-

Source: Stănescu, S.M., 2013, Institutional Framework Impacting Social Economy, in *Social Economy Review*, vol. III, nr. 3/ 2013, p. 66

¹ http://www.un.org/documents/instruments/docs_en.asp?year=1969

² The complete titles of the declarations/conventions are available in the enumeration from above.

³ Ibid. 96

In the following we analyse UN regulations with direct impact on improving the situation of women, in view of highlighting the progresses recorded in acknowledging the role of women in society.

According to Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), “*everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction on any kind such as (...) sex*”. The declaration mentions that all are equal against discrimination (art. 7), the right of all to marry and to found a family (art. 16 para. 1), everyone’s right to work and free choice of employment (art. 23 para. 1), everyone’s right to education (art. 26 alin 1) and the right “*to freely participate in the cultural life of the community*” (art. 27 para. 1) (** UN, 1948).

The Convention on Political Rights of Women (1952) represented a first step in the process of implementing the regulations regarding equality between men and women. The main promoted originality elements were the right of women to vote (art. I) and be elected (art. II). Women’s right to work was reiterated, as it was mentioned also in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to article III, women may hold any public office (** UN, 1952). Once the above-mentioned convention was ratified, women gained on short-time the access to the political life, but on long-term a complex process of official reflection on the role of women within the society was triggered from a wider perspective than the reproductive one.

Romania ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979) in January 1982, in the third wave of countries to sign the Convention. An optional protocol of CEDAW was signed by our country on 6th September 2000 and ratified in June 2003 (** CEDAW, 2003, p. 3).

According to CEDAW, “discrimination against women” represents “*any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex, which has as effect or purpose impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field*” (art. 1) (** UN, 1979). CEDAW details recommendations of measures that the signatory states must adopt within the national legislation, in the political and public life, in the right of maintaining or changing nationality, in education, in labour force employment, health, and in other fields of the economic and social life, for protecting women from the rural area, in marriage, and in family relationships.

Article 11 of CEDAW details the measures that signatory states must adopt for eliminating the discrimination of women in the workforce. Among these, we mention “*equal treatment in respect of work of equal value*” (letter d), and “*the right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions*” (letter f) (** UN, 1979).

The CEDAW recommendations for the member states include “*to modify social and cultural patterns (...) with a view of achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes, or on stereotyped roles for men and women*” (art. 5 letter a) and “*to ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children*” (art. 5 letter b). In

Romania, due to the lacking interministerial drafting and correlation of action plans (at least between the Ministry of the National Education, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly, Ministry of Culture, and Ministry of Health) the implementation of these recommendations is difficult to evaluate, as there is the risk that they remain only at the level of national desirability.

The signatory countries are monitored and requested to submit regular national reports regarding the *“legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures which they have adopted (...) and on the progress made in this respect: within one year after the entry into force for the State concerned; and thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee so requests (art. 18, *** UN, 1979).”*

CEDAW represented a step forward in acknowledging the rights for women. On short-term, the signatory states were encouraged to make efforts regarding the implementation of the recommended measures. On long-term was continued the complex process of reconsidering the roles and place of women within the society. Monitoring the undertaken steps at the level of each country poses the issue of operationalizing the measures stipulated by the Convention and of identifying sets of national specific indicators which are comparable at international level.

On the basis of the regulation frameworks mentioned above, UN continued the efforts of acknowledging and respecting the rights of women. In accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action,¹ *„the human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full participation of women in political, civic, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community” (*** UN, 1993a).*

According to the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), “violence against women” represents *“any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women”* (art. 1). Women may be victims of violence within the family, community, at the workplace, in educational institutions, or when violence is perpetrated or condoned by the state. (art.2). A special form of violence is *“sexual harassment or intimidation at work”* (art. 2 letter b). The signatory states are called upon to *“condemn violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination”* (art. 4). Among the recommended measures to the signatory states is included also *“to promote research, collect data and compile statistics, especially concerning domestic violence”* (art. 4 lit. k) (*** UN, 1993b). The last periodical report submitted by our country in 2003 regarding the CEDAW monitoring, was criticised with respect to the statistical data, and the recommendation regarding this aspect was of including relevant statistics and their improvement with new data referring, for instance, at the condition of the elderly or disabled women (*** CEDAW, 2006, p. 6).

From the institutional viewpoint, the adequate approach of the specific issues related to women represented the main reason for which, in 1946, was decided on the creation

¹ Adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 25 June 1993

within the UN of a sub-commission dedicated exclusively to the statutes of women. Among the notable achievements of this structure we mention the alteration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, respectively by eliminating all discriminatory elements towards women. The initial form of Article 1 was altered from “*all men and brothers*” in “*all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights*”. At the same time, in the preamble of the Universal Declaration is reasserted the belief in the equality between men and women. The sub-commission played a key-role in initiating and in the ratifying by the member-states the UN Conventions (Achimescu *et al.*, 2011, p. 178).

3. European Regulations regarding the fight against discrimination

From the viewpoint of the European regulations, significant regarding the issue of discrimination are the Council Directive 2000/43/EC from 29 June 2000 regarding the implementation of the principle of equal chances irrespective of their race or ethnic origin, and the Council Directive 2000/78/EC from 27 November 2000 which sets the guidelines for the equal treatment on employment and occupation. The member-states resorted to two types of solutions against the mobbing phenomenon: adopting specific legislation for combating the phenomenon (Belgium and Sweden), or strengthening complementary prevention and combating measures (Germany and Italy) (Tomescu, Cace (coords.) 2010, p. 32-35).

In accordance with article 17 of the Council Directive 2000/43/EC and to article 19 of the Council Directive 2000/78/EC, it was resolved that member-states submit to the European Parliament and to the Council until 19th June 2005 and thereafter after a period of five years each information required to draft the report regarding the implementation of the Directive (***) Council Directive, 2000a, (***) Council Directive, 2000b). The European Commission submitted to our country a letter of “default of the Romanian authorities (no. C (2012) 39996 final) issued on 22 June 2012 in the Case 2012/2099, for failure to comply with the obligation as member-state of the EU to correctly and completely transpose the Directive 2000/43/EC” which received as reply the commitment to solve “by mid-year 2013” (***) Government of Romania, 2013). In 2013, was adopted the Emergency Ordinance 19/2013 for altering and amending the Governmental Ordinance no. 137/ 2000 regarding prevention and sanctioning all forms of discrimination. The Ordinance mentions that “*undergoing a legislative process of correctly transposing the other aspects underpinned by the European Commission would imply a longer period of time, which would lead to exceeding the term assumed by the Romanian authorities against the European Commission*” (*ibid.*.” The risk is identified for similar procedures to be undertaken by the European Commission because of the delay in transposing European Directives (idem) “*which might result in payment of a lump sum, as well as of penalties with interest accrued*”.

One of the most recent European regulations is represented by the Convention of the European Council of Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2011). In accordance with the other provisions, corroborated with

this regulation, our country revised the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating the Violence Phenomenon within the Family..

4. Regulation of the fight against discrimination at national level

During the communist period, the promotion of women's non-discrimination was less represented by legislative measures on grounds of the "assumption according to which opting for the general principle of the equality of sexes and the exclusion of elimination is enough" (Zamfir *et al.*, 1999, p. 269). The mechanisms of promoting non-discrimination included "political orientation and the representation quota" (*ibid.*, p. 269-270).

Romania made efforts for the alignment with the international conventions by transposing within the national legislative framework of the provisions included in the UN Conventions and European Directives.

Regarding the implementation of the provisions included in CEDAW, Romania submitted the second and third periodical reports as a unitary document in 1992 thereby covering the period since 1987 on (** CEDAW, 1999, p. 2). The fourth and fifth reports, corresponding to the progresses recorded in the period 1992-1999, were submitted to the Committee for Eliminating the Discrimination against Women in 1999 and these two reports were debated within the 23rd Session (2000).

Table 3. National Reports submitted by Romania

No.	States parties	Date due	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
1.	Initial report	6 February 1983	14 January 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.45)	Twelfth (1993)
2.	Second periodic report	6 February 1987	19 October 1992 (CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3)	Twelfth (1993)
3.	Third periodic report	6 February 1991	19 October 1992 (CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3)	Twelfth (1993)
4.	Fourth periodic report	6 February 1995	10 December 1998 (CEDAW/C/ROM/4-5)	Twenty-third (2000)
5.	Fifth periodic report	6 February 1999	10 December 1998 (CEDAW/C/ROM/4-5)	Twenty-third (2000)
6.	Sixth periodic report	6 February 2003	10 December 2003 (CEDAW/C/ROM/6)	Thirty-fifth (2006)

Source: Status of submission and consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as at 31 August 2006; <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw%20report%20submission%20status%2031Aug2006.pdf>

The sixth periodical report, regarding the period 1998-2002, was forwarded in 2003 and debated within the 35th Session (2006). The report highlights the progresses recorded in the

development of the institutional building by setting-up the National Agency for the Protection of Family, of the Pilot-Assistance and Protection Centre for Victims of Domestic Violence and of the Family Information and Consulting Centre¹ and is based on the statistics in the 2002 Census of population and housing (** CEDAW, 2003, p. 3-6).

In accordance with the comments received from the Committee for Eliminating Discrimination against Women, based on the sixth periodical report, a series of progresses were remarked upon, some concern-raising issues were identified, and recommendations were made for which the monitoring outcomes are expected in the next national report. The highlighted positive aspects are:

- Legislative changes (passing Law 202/2002 regarding the equality of chances between men and women with subsequent alterations and amendments², the Emergency Ordinance 137/2000, regarding prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, Law 217/2003 regarding prevention and combating violence in the family and Law 678/2001 regarding prevention of human trafficking³),
- Adjustment of the institutional building with respect to the issue of women (set-up, in 2005, at central level of the National Agency for the Equality of Chances between Men and Women, with territorial representativeness, and in 2004 of the National Agency for Family Protection, and of the National Agency for Roma in 2005, and of the National Agency for the Prevention of Human Trafficking and of Monitoring the Assistance for Victims of Human Trafficking⁴),
- The adoption of the National Strategy for Equality of Chances between Men and Women for the period 2006-2009, of the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence 2005-2007, and of the National Strategy against Human Trafficking for the period 2006-2010⁵.
- Changes of the Civil Code regarding the increase in the minimum marriage age to 18 years of age (**, CEDAW, 2006, p. 2).

¹ Their attributions and the ones of the National Authority for Child's Rights Protection were taken over by the National Authority for Family and Child's Rights Protection..

² Law no. 202 from 19 April 2002, republished, regarding equality of chances and treatment between men and women, published with the Official Bulletin no. 150 from 1 March 2007.

³ Altered by Governmental Emergency Ordinance no. 41/ 2011, for altering Law no. 678/ 2001, regarding prevention and combating human trafficking published with the Official Bulletin, Part I, no. 304 from 3 May 2011.

⁴ Conform Hotărârii Guvernului nr. 1584/2005 pentru înființarea, organizarea și funcționarea Agenției Naționale de Prevenire a Traficului de Persoane și Monitorizare a Asistenței Acordate Victimelor Traficului de Persoane. Denumirea actuală este Agenția Națională împotriva traficului de persoane, conform Hotărârii Guvernului According to the Governmental Resolution no. 1584/2005 for establishing, organising and functioning of the National Agency of Preventing Human Trafficking and for Monitoring Assistance for Victims of Human Trafficking. The current name is the National Agency against Human Trafficking, according to the Governmental Resolution no.460/2011, regarding the organization and functioning of the National Agency against Human Trafficking.

⁵ The update version is the National Strategy against Human Trafficking for the period 2012-2016.

The report of the Committee for Eliminating the Discrimination against Women, compared with Romania's sixth periodical report identified a series of concern-raising reasons. For each of them a recommendation was formulated. Our country is required to assume all obligations resulting from the quality of signatory state and to return with details about the registered progresses on the occasion of the seventh report. The seventh report was planned for February 2007, but the eighth periodical report was planned for submitting in February 2011. It was resolved to submit a single joint report in February 2011 (***, CEDAW, 2006, p. 2-7).

Table 4. Main reasons of concern and recommendations of the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, against Romania's sixth report for implementing CEDAW

No.	Weaknesses	Recommendations
1.	institutional cooperation in achieving the CEDAW goals;	communicating the conclusions of the report to all relevant institutional actors and with responsibilities in assuming accountability according to CEDAW;
2.	limited statistical data that do not allow for evaluating progress;	Improvement of data collection
3.	insufficient knowledge about the recent progresses in the legislative and policy frameworks by the population;	organising a national campaign of information and of raising awareness about the new legislative provisions for protecting women-victims of domestic violence or of discrimination;
4.	insufficient knowledge about CEDAW and of the optional protocol by experts in the legal and judicial field;	improved information of the experts in the legal and judicial field about the CEDAW provisions by awareness-raising campaigns;
5.	insufficient resources and visibility of the National Agency for the Equality of Chances between Men and Women in promoting the rights of women at central and national level;	allotment of necessary resources for strengthening the role of the National Agency for Equality of Chances between Men and Women as institutional mechanism of promoting the rights of women;
6.	poor representation of women in high-level and decision structures;	improving women representation in management and decision positions;
7.	insufficient protection of victims of domestic violence, especially in the rural area;	rural supporting victims of domestic violence, especially of those living in the rural area; allocation of necessary funds; an operational 24/7 emergency line
8.	the volume of human trafficking phenomenon in Romania;	the analysis of the human trafficking phenomenon from its origins on;
9.	persistence of high levels of abortion and infant mortality despite made efforts;	implementing programmes that would allow access of women to health services, and family planning counselling/services;
10.	The situation of Rroma ethnic women;	hollistic approach for eliminating the multiple and cross-sectional discrimination forms faced by the Rroma women, including here the

No.	Weaknesses	Recommendations
		approval of the budget for supporting the implementation of the action plan for Rroma's Inclusion Decade 2005-2015;
11.	the situation of women on labour market, the continued concentration in poor paid jobs of the public sector (health, education) and wage differences between men and women both in the public and private sector	continued efforts for eliminating gender barriers in employment;
12.	situation of women in the rural area faced with limited access to education, employment and health services	directing policies towards women in the rural area, inclusively by setting-up a calendar in the National Strategy for Equality of Chances between Men and Women for the period 2006-2009;
13.		inclusion in the following report of information regarding elderly women and women with disabilities

Source: *** Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2006, *Concluding comments of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Romania*, p. 2-6

Among other measures adopted by our country towards implementing responsibilities assumed according to international conventions, we mention the adoption of the Ordinance no. 137 from 31 August 2000 regarding the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination with the subsequent alterations and amendments. The normative deed contains principles and definitions of the guaranteed rights, by virtue of complying with the principle of citizens' equality, of privileges' and discrimination exclusion (art. 1).

The sections of the Ordinance approach forms of discrimination in complementary fields, where it can unfold: economic activity, regarding employment and occupation (section I), regarding access to public administrative and legal services, to health services, to goods and facilities (section II), access to education (section III), freedom of movement, right to chose residence and access to public places (section IV) and right to personal dignity (section V). The regulation of the functioning and organisation of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD) (section VI) represents an institutional indicator of the national arrangement for implementing the provisions of the international conventions. However, we underpin that there is no explicit reference to women, albeit the most recent convention dedicated to women (the Declaration on Eliminating Violence against Women) has been adopted already in 1993.

In accordance with international provisions, but also with the recently adopted Convention of the Council of Europe regarding prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011), our country revised the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating the Domestic Violence Phenomenon (MLFSP, 2012a, p. 2).

The legislative changes implemented at the beginning of the year 2013 detail aspects related to the functioning terms within CNCD but do not compensate this deficit (**Emergency Governmental Ordinance 19/2013¹, ** Law 189/2013², ** Romanian Parliament, 2013). A possible answer might be related to the fact that the adopted measures answer to the request addressed by “the letter of the European Commission regarding the default of the Romanian authorities (...) for failing to comply with the obligation as member-state of the European Union to correctly and completely transpose the Directive 2000/43/EC” in the assumed time interval under the reserve that “undergoing a legislative process for the correct and complete transposition of the other aspects mentioned by the European Commission would mean a longer period of time, which would lead to exceeding the term assumed by the Romanian authorities in front of the European Commission (**Romanian Government, 2013).

Among the steps undertaken in adopting at national level the international regulations, we mention the adoption of Law 612/2002, on formulating a statement about the recognition by Romania of the competence of the Committee of Eliminating Racial Discrimination in accordance with article 14 of CEDAW passed by the UN General Assembly at New York on 21 December 1965. In accordance with the Law 612/ 2002 our country recognizes the “competence of the Committee of Eliminating Racial Discrimination to receive and examine claims from persons under the jurisdiction of the Romanian State and who claim they are victims of infringement by Romania of any of the rights provided by the International Convention of Eliminating All Forms of Racial Discrimination” (art. 1). However, this does not grant to the committee the “competence to examine claims (communications) of some persons invoking the existence and infringement of collective rights” (art. 2). As these fall under the competence of CNCD.

5. Conclusions

The article analysed the main international regulations with impact on improving the situation of women, inclusively by combating discrimination and their transposition within the Romanian legal framework. We are faced also in the future with a series of obstacles in implementing the protection measures for women against discrimination and in monitoring the recorded progresses. The determinant factors of this situation include: the low number of women represented represented in decisional for a the weak coordination of the public and private milieu, stereotypes related to the role of women in society, the “way in which the provisions of the international conventions regarding human rights and the national context intersect with each other”, cultural differences, the responsibility of the state and, last but not least, the perception of women regarding the situations they are faced with (Vonica-Răduțiu, 2003, p. 15-16).

¹** Emergency Ordinance 19/2013 for altering and amending the Governmental Ordinance no. 137/2000 regarding the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination.

²** Law no. 189 from 25 June 2013 regarding the approval of the Emergency Ordinance of the Government no. 19/2013 for altering and amending the Governmental Ordinance no. 137/2000 regarding the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination.

The failure in solving these aspects expose women from Romania to various forms of discrimination from which the most acutely felt is the one on the labour market, both on employment and in maintaining a job. The data regarding Romania show that even though men are preponderantly represented in the informal sector (51.1%), the chances of a male individual to work in the informal sector are by 29% less than in the case of women” (Pisică *et al.*, 2012, p. 267).

Promoting life-work balance depends a lot on the supply of services available to women for caring for little children (crèches, kindergartens, schools) or for family members exposed to various risks (disability, incurable disease, immobilised to bed). In the absence of such support measures, women give up practically their jobs in favour of caring for children, or for family members. A sociological report regarding the situation of youths in the rural area underpins that this situation is the more acutely felt in this environment. The lack of kindergartens with extended programme exposes mothers to the risk of no longer being able to take a job at a certain distance from their residence. (***) MLFSP, 2012b, p. 80, 147, 149).

Women’s job satisfaction is a topic insufficiently researched in Romania. A study regarding social economy in two development regions (Bucharest-Ilfov and South-East) highlighted very high values of satisfaction for women employed within the social economy, against men. The reasons are related to the perception according to which “work in a social economy entity has outcomes at social level, succeeding indeed to help people. Women believe at a personal level that such jobs provide for opportunities of professional development, recognition, success, and financial satisfaction,” (Achimescu *et al.* 2011, p. 196).

Romania ratified the main UN conventions regarding the situation of women. With respect to the adoption of European regulations, delays are found, albeit progresses were recorded at the level of institutional building and at the one of the legal framework. Among the most recent alterations we mention the abolishment of the National Agency for Women’s Protection and the transfer of attributions to the Directorate for Child’s Protection. At the same time, the legal framework was reviewed just as the National Strategy for Combating Domestic Violence.

The last national report submitted in 2003 regarding the monitoring of progresses recorded by Romania in implementing CEDAW identifies a series of concern-raising reasons. The monitoring of the situation of women especially in the areas identified as problematic by the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and implementing the recommendations received to this end might contribute to decreasing discrimination and improving the quality of life for women in Romania.

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