



MONITORING OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN BULGARIA

SUMMARY OF REPORT 2022

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THE CONVENTION

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted in 1979 and has been in force in Bulgaria since 1982. By accepting the Convention, our country undertakes to include the principle of equality of men and women in the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria or other relevant legislation; adopt appropriate legislative and other measures prohibiting any discrimination against women; to establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal footing with men and to ensure, with the help of the courts and other state authorities, the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination, etc.

In fulfillment of the international and European commitments undertaken, the principle of equality has been introduced in the Bulgarian legislation. Yet, differences still exist in women's and men's employment, in the amount of remuneration and pensions received, in decision-making, in the distribution of household duties and in caring for dependent family members.

Since 2016, the Equality between Women and Men Act has been in force, on the basis of which a National Strategy for the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men has been developed with a time frame for 2021-2030.

CEDAW IMPLEMENTATION IN BULGARIA 2022

For the Ombudsman, the current Equality between Women and Men Act is rather formal and does not propose new arrangements that correspond to the level of development of social relations and does not regulate the basic mechanisms for gender equality. It is rather declaratory in nature, with no significant practical effect.

A serious problem in the country is the uneven concentration of women and men in the various sectors of the labour market, for the regulation of which adequate measures have not been taken.

It is still mostly women who are responsible for raising children, caring for the elderly and dependent family members, which directly reflects on the fact that women have less free time than men.

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Serious targeted measures and actions are needed regarding the protection of women from multiple discrimination in various spheres, mainly in the administration of justice, but also in education, employment, health, housing policy and social services.

The Ombudsman notes that the State is obliged to implement the policy of gender equality aimed at sustainable structural changes and that would lead to a sustainable improvement of women's rights and gender equality.

Unfortunately, the principle of gender equality is also violated by public statements that are sexist, hateful, and lead most often to blocked actions in combatting gender-based violence and gender-based stereotypes.

THE OMBUDSMAN IN DEFENCE OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In 2022, the efforts of the Ombudsman Diana Kovacheva continued to be focused on adopting the Protection against Domestic Violence Act (PDVA) so that victims can receive more efficient protection. In Bulgaria, this problem has been systematic for years, but deteriorated especially during the pandemic, although there is no official statistics – in the three years of COVID, about 60 women were killed in our country, and domestic violence does not only affect women, but also men, disabled, elderly parents, children, anyone who finds themselves locked up with an abuser at home.

Meeting of the Ombudsman Diana Kovacheva with the Minister of Justice Nadezhda Yordanova on 11 January to discuss the need for urgent legislative changes in the Criminal Code and the PDVA to ensure more effective protection of victims.

Prof. Kovacheva emphasized that in 2020 the Ministry of Justice prepared a draft for amendment of the PDVA, which was not submitted for consideration in the 44th National Assembly and is pending approval of the Ministry of Justice.



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A week later, on 17 January, the Ombudsman insisted on the **immediate submission to the National Assembly of the finalised draft of the PDVA**. This took place at a **meeting organised by the Minister of Justice, Nadezhda Yordanova**, with the institutions and non-governmental organisations that worked on its preparation.



“Today is the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. In 2019, I was the first Ombudsman in the world to be heard before the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Geneva. I spoke about domestic violence in Bulgaria. I made 10 recommendations for changes in our legislation and institutional practices, but absolutely nothing followed.” This was stated by the Ombudsman at the round table: *“Active against violence against women. Love doesn't hurt! Speak up! Help!”*, organised by the Animus Association Foundation on the occasion of 25 November.



The Ombudsman emphasised that in three years, about 60 women were murdered and this is the “official” statistics from the media, and there are many victims of violence who were not covered by these statistics. According to her, a significant percentage of the victims of violence are men, people with disabilities, elderly parents, people who are completely helpless and whose voices are not heard.

- ✓ *“Annually, about 380 men report domestic violence on the hotline, about 900 children, and during the pandemic these numbers jumped, which means that anyone can become a victim of domestic violence. The problem is that we can try to structure domestic violence with*

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administrative measures, but the truth is that dissuasive penalties are needed.” This was stated by Ombudsman Diana Kovacheva on 12 December at the Forum on Policies and Actions to Combat Violence against Women, organised by the Bulgarian Fund for Women and the Bulgarian Platform of the European Women’s Lobby, with the participation of representatives of the institutions and the non-governmental sector.

“I am not a supporter of harsher punishments and I am far from believing that everything should be considered a crime and included in the Criminal Code, but domestic violence should be in the Criminal Code when a serious crime is committed in the context of domestic violence,” argued the Ombudsman.




Година	Общ брой заловеди	Пострадали			Извършители	
		мъже	жени	деца	мъже	жени
2019	3240	377	2909	658	3001	292
2020	3057	349	2567	898	2747	318
2021	3244	380	2816	935	2983	309

За периода от 01.01.2022 г. до 31.10.2022 г. по данни на СЗДН са издадени общо 3085 заловеди за защита (всички са 216-кратовна 902, като пострадали са, като следва, 2656 жени, 349 мъже и 873 деца, а извършителите: 283 жени и 2713 мъже (МВР).

Данните на народните институции са: не напълно над жени струва на страната ни над 6,8 милиарда евро годишно (EIGE).

- ✓ The Ombudsman and her team participated in all the meetings of the parliamentary committees in which domestic violence protection bills were discussed, insisted and supported the adoption of the Act, but the problem remained unresolved due to the short life of the 48th National Assembly. The fight continues!