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## **1. The relevance of the BPfA for the improvement of gender equality for media and ICT mechanisms at the national level and its link to the Agenda 2030**

The 2020 year's *ideoscape* and *mediascape* are marked by the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women, the adoption of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995), and 5<sup>th</sup> year of the 2030 *Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals*.

The year 2020 will be the first time when the implementation of the BPfA is reviewed alongside with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development fully in place.

The research all over the world suggested that more than two decades since Beijing, gender issues in media organizations and media content have remained pertinent. The power to change is a global one, i.e. it represents the task of “governments, the media and ordinary audiences” (Sarah Macharia 2018:7).

More recently, the importance of normative components – such as codes, policies, strategies and governing arrangements - in combating persisting inequalities, has been reaffirmed “in debates and initiatives at the international level, including the Global Alliance for Media and Gender and its Research and Policy Committee; the UN Women Global Compact “Step it up for gender equality in the media”; the Untwin University Network for Gender Media and ICT as well as by a number of advocacy and scholarly contributions to the debate” ( Claudia Padovani 2018: 8).

The collapse of communist regimes in Eastern and Central European countries in 1989 brought important achievements, such as the freedom of expression, and the birth and development of the free press and of the democratic regimes.

It is the case of Romania, that after a totalitarian period of 45 years, reinstated a democratic regime, and the market economy starting from December 1989. The years 90s represented for Romania a fertile ground for the seeds of democracy and human rights. In this context, Romania adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace (BPfA) (1995). BPfA was used by activists to publicly promote an agenda for women empowerment.

## **2. Evidence on BPfA and Agenda 2030 progresses, gaps and emerging concerns on the nine issues listed during the last 5 years.**

### *1. Freedom of Expression*

The equality between women and men is acknowledged and guaranteed by the Romanian constitution, which was adopted in 1991, and revised in 2003. Nevertheless, as explains the report on gender mainstreaming in Romania (EIGE, 2015), the most important steps in sustaining from a legislative point of view the equality between sexes were made in the context of the Romania's accession to European Union (January, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007)

The freedom of expression is guaranteed by the Romanian Constitution. Romania is one of the 86 countries rated free in the *Freedom in the World 2019* report released by Freedom House on February 4, 2019 which evaluated the state of freedom in 195 countries and 14 territories during 2018.

Romania has an aggregate freedom score of 81 in the above-mentioned recent report, out of 100 possible. Only Sweden, Norway and Finland got the maximum score of 100, while the Netherlands and Canada got close with a score of 99. At the opposite end, Syria's score is 0 (Freedom House Report 2019).

However, we have to note that for the last 30 years, media have been a subject of political pressures, and economic constraints (Ghinea, C., & Mungiu-Pippidi, A., 2010; Avadani, 2017), which set limits to the freedom of expression. As Avadani (2017, p. 1995) argues: "With the fall of the previous Communist regime in the early 1990s, the Romanian media have been exposed in the space of just 20 years to explosive growth, political instrumentalization, and economic recession, leaving them little scope to plan or develop independently of external influences. Weaknesses in the democratic system distorted the budding media sector."

### *2. Gender Media Policy (which includes laws, regulatory frameworks, policies)*

In Romania, there are no specific laws on gender and media. However, several laws and policies cover issues that are indirectly related to gender and media.

"The EU acquis certainly played a key part in the elaboration of political and administrative tools for gender equality. The two national structures with gender-equality responsibilities (the National Agency for Equal Opportunities and the National Anti-discrimination Council) were created as part of the conditions for EU accession". The pace of implementation of gender mainstreaming in Romania was accelerated in the pre- and post-EU accession years (roughly 2005–2008), when it received special attention from the government. In addition, the European Year for Equal Opportunities for All (2007) also played an important role." (Gender Mainstreaming Countries. Romania, available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/countries/romania>)

The European Institute for Gender Equality synthesizes in the report *Gender Mainstreaming Countries. Romania* the legal framework for gender equality: the Law 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, republished, in 2015 with additional amendments and supplements, such as: the institutional mechanism in the field of gender equality - The *National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men* subordinated to the Ministry of Labor and Social Justice (MLSJ), reestablished by the Romanian Parliament which adopted the Law no. 229/2015.

*The National Strategy in the field of equal opportunities between women and men for the period 2014-2017* and the General Plan of Action have promoted a gender perspective in the educational process, combating gender stereotypes in the educational system; have promoted a gender perspective in the employment policies, raising awareness regarding the wage gap between women and men; have acknowledged the importance of the conciliation between working life and family life and of the gender balance in the family care; have fought against sexual harassment at the workplace, combating gender violence; have monitored the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making.

By Law 30/2016, Romania has ratified the Istanbul Convention and at the moment the harmonization of internal legislation with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention was achieved by the adoption of Law no. 174/2018 regarding the amendment and completion of the Law no. 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence, republished and Law 178/2018 regarding the amendment and completion of the Law no. 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment for women and men (Questionnaire Beijing +25 Romania 2019)

Currently there is a new integrated *National Strategy on gender equality and preventing and combating domestic violence for 2018-2021* period, focused on different areas of specific intervention through concrete measures and actions such as: i) Introducing gender perspective into the national policies; ii) Raising awareness of children and young people regarding legal provisions in the field of gender equality; iii) Combating gender stereotypes among young people; iv) Encouraging entrepreneurship for girls/women and young people coming from disadvantage areas; v) Improving women situation on labor market; vi) assuring work/ life balance.

Romania reaffirms its commitment to the implementation and promotion of the fundamental values stated in the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women - CEDAW*, and in this respect, “the *National Strategy on Promoting Gender Equality and Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence for the period 2018-2021* adopted by the current government aims, through its Operational Action Plan, also to promote non-discriminatory values and principles on the basis of gender in education, health, employment policies, reconciliation of working life and family life, integration of women from vulnerable groups on the labor market”. (Questionnaire Beijing +25 Romania 2019: 53).

*3. Media Content (which includes representation of women in news -GMMP-, sexist stereotypes)* Analyses of the triad women–media and communication–society are centered on some key dimensions: women as social actors in the journalism profession, the gender image conveyed by media, and the content for women as it is built up within gender-oriented messages (Marinescu 2008: 282).

Gender imbalances permeate the Romanian media landscape. Gender stereotypes, influenced by advertising, are ever-present. Although Romanian civil society is sensitive to women's issues, this is not reflected in the way media organizations promote women staff or in their editorial policies. Few women arrive to top jobs in the media, and media organizations pay little attention to gender. Even women journalists show little awareness of the gender patterns that determine their working conditions (Apostol 2018). The level of criticism, even with regard to sexism in advertising and media content in general has begun to increase since 2015.

The most extensive longitudinal study *Global Media Monitoring Project* (1995,2000 2005, 2000, 2015) emphasizes, again and at a significant temporal distance, the maintenance and consolidation of the cleavage between women as authors in the media and women as subjects of the media message: 22 percent of the news subjects were women compared to 62 percent women journalists. The gender difference is present also in the fields in which the news subjects are presented: The highest number of interviewed women were in sports and celebrity areas, while men dominated the sphere of political debates in all GMMP monitoring (at national, regional and international level).

According to the 2015 *Global Media Monitoring Project Report for Romania*, the gender gap between male and female news reporters is narrowing in many major news topics (politics and government) and a slight improvement concerning the presence of women as subjects of news appears too. Women represent roughly one-third of the subjects of news: 32 percent in print; 19 percent in radio news and 40 percent in TV news. Men are still portrayed in news as the main actors of public life: 76 percent of subjects in news concerning politics are men, while only 24 percent are women. Subjects such as politics and economy are still regarded as men's concerns in traditional media, as well as on Internet, where women and men are even more unequally represented as news subjects.

Even if women are more numerous than men in journalism schools, women are under-represented in decision-making bodies within media organisations: the reasons for this lie in the inadequate national legal framework for the media regarding gender equality and in the total absence of institutional points of reference: media organisations in Romania do not have departments to deal with gender and media issues.

On the other side, civil society associations campaigning on women and media issues exist, but they find it difficult to access the financial resources to carry on their work. More generally, the gender imbalance in decision-making in the media reflects that in Romanian society and politics: there is a widespread feeling of discouragement on the part of women, due to the small number of women occupying prestigious roles in the public sphere.

#### 4. *ICT Content (which includes cyber-violence against women, sexist hate speech, #MeToo and other social media movements)*

Although media reported many cases of cyber-violence against women, sexist hate speech, and women's harassment on social media, the national institutions did not manage to have a pro-active attitude, and to actively get involved in reducing the number of cases. Journalists from an independent media institution that reported the case of a young woman, harassed by her boyfriend on social media, explained that police were ineffective in protecting the victim and had no internal procedure to deal with such cases.

On the academic level, a recent study on ICT, convergence and digitization as academic research topics, showed that cyber-violence against women, sexist hate speech, #MeToo and other social media movements were not among the main themes of research in Romanian academia (see the results of *State-of-the-Art Research on Convergence and Social Media. Research Agendas and Roadmaps Deliverable*, Ref. Ares (2019)1275929 - 25/02/2019).

*5. Women in Indigenous and Community Media (which includes women's access, attacks against them)*

No specific information available.

*6. Gender and Media and ICT Conglomeration (which includes women's access and participation in media and ICT industries, labour rights, etc.)*

Recent studies (Ross & Padovani 2016, Roventa-Frumusani et al. 2016, Surugiu 2013, EIGE 2013, GMMP 2015, etc.), both Romanian, European, and global, present a gender imbalance in media organisations, in content, as well as in journalism practices.

“The influential nature of the media industry informing public opinion underlines the need to address the representation of women in high-profile, decision-making posts. Substantial progress has been made in the area, with women occupying the field in greater numbers, and often outnumbering men on journalism courses. However, the issue of representation of women at the top levels remains a key concern”. (EIGE, 2013, p. 8).

The Romanian ‘mediascape,’ as well as the global one, has been affected in the past few years by two important pressures and, consequently, changes: the economic crisis and the digital revolution. The status of journalists, especially women journalists is marked by uncertainty, precarity and vulnerability; these gender inequalities are added to the generic current and acute ones, such as poverty and longevity. The ‘double burden’ results in women’s professional under-utilisation (part time jobs, freelancers, short-term contracts), as well as their over-utilisation (multitasking in both the profession and the family) (D. Roventa-Frumusani *et al.* 2016).

In Romania, 43 % of strategic positions in media organisations are occupied by women and women constitute around same amount on operational decision-making positions. The representation of women in decision-making posts is more or less same in public media organisations (EIGE, 2013, p. 9).

*7. Gender in Media and ICT Education (which includes gender in the curricula of Journalism and Communication schools, in media and information literacy, etc.)*

The Romanian higher-education system offers various study programmes covering multiple aspects of the gender equality topic, which are being approached by the specific means of the field of study they are included in. To these master programmes are added different projects implemented at university level (by various faculties or Doctoral Schools, for example), aiming to promote gender equality and combat discrimination. “Relevant examples in this respect are: the FP7 STAGES project (Structural Transformation to Achieve Gender Equality in Science Project) implemented by the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, in Iași, during 2012-2015 and the Professionnalisation aux Savoirs autour du Genre et de l’Egalité – PASSAGE Project of the University of Bucharest, implemented during 2014-2017 and financed through the Erasmus+ Programme.” (Questionnaire p. 33) and an international master programme entitled Equal

Opportunities Policies in a Romanian and European context, affiliated to the European Master EGALES (Etudes Genre et Actions Liées à l’Egalité dans la Société).

*8. Gender and Digital Rights (which includes universal access to ICTs, women and girls in STEM, gender and Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, etc.)*

According to Questionnaire (p. 51) data published by Eurostat for the year 2017 show that Romania is above the European average (41%) in terms of the percentage of women involved in science and engineering. In the educational field, the Romanian ITC faculties had 31% female students and at the industry level 25.7% of the employees are women.

In 2018, a quarter of the employed persons in the IT sector in Romania are women, compared to the EU average of 16%.

With these results Romania could become the country with most women in the digital sector and an example of good practices for the European Union. “If we encourage women to approach this sector with the same openness and interest in the future, gender diversity would definitely help increase performance, productivity and innovation in technology companies.” (Questionnaire p. 51).

*9. Access to Information*

No specific information available.

**3. Recommendations for follow-up/actions (with lobby effort for eventual inclusion of the actions in the regional meetings previous to CSW64, CSW64 agreed conclusions, the Global Forum on the BPfA+25 and the 2020 UN General Assembly Resolutions).**

The EIGE 2013 report *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Women and the media—advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations* formulates several general recommendations:

“Organisational cultures and structures that prevent women’s advancement in decision-making positions should be tackled by internal policies and practical measures in the media sector.

National policy-makers should be more encouraging in fostering change from a passive commitment towards a more pro-active approach to gender equality in media organisations.

Good practices should be shared as they are an important prerequisite for change.

Professional media organisations and associations should act as role models by striving for gender equality in their own internal structures.” (2013, p. 17)

To these recommendations that keep their relevance 5 years later, we could add the following issues:

Gender and media issues have to be considered a critical area of concern in Romania, with no specific national policies on that domain. Romania still needs an active and visible policy of mainstreaming the gender perspective in national policies.

NGOs working in the domain of gender and media should be offered the possibility to access public funds for research and intervention.

The lack of sensitivity of gender and media could also be addressed by policies developed by relevant bodies, such as the Romanian National Audiovisual Council. The negative portrayal of women in audiovisual content is a reality in Romania

New policies which specifically address the issue of harassment of girls and women on social media should be designed. This action is urgent, and must involve the civil society in the effort of eliminating the online harassment of girls and women.

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