

# The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality


## Methodologies and good practices on assessing the costs of violence against women

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Comments paper – Romania



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# Assessing the costs of violence against women in Romania

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## Abstract:

In Romania, there is no model for calculating the costs generated by domestic violence that brings together all sectors and which constitutes a cost value for all related and support services. As a result, this paper can only use limited data and information collected by central authorities. The approach used is “bottom up” in relation to the type of service provided to each victim and its complexity.

## 1. Relevant country context

Thus, the objective of this paper is to provide estimates of the costs related to violence against women, also aiming to provide an understanding of the scale of this problem in Romania. The study will include costs for the social services system due to the availability of established administrative data at the national level. Estimates should be considered as indicative. The estimate has a margin of uncertainty because it is based on data limited to the information provided by central authorities, being constructed using a secondary data analysis that cannot be verified using a triangulation method.

In Romania, the official approach to the phenomenon of "domestic violence" (Pop, 2002) was achieved with the publication of Law no. 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence, but also by establishing the National Agency for Family Protection, a structure subordinated to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, which had among its responsibilities to prevent and combat domestic violence. In this context, the Ministry of Labour, through its subordinate structure, collected and centralised data received from authorities, public institutions and non-governmental organisations with activity in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence since 2004.

In Romania there is no integrated perspective of data collection on the phenomenon of domestic violence, in the sense that all the costs generated by this phenomenon should be highlighted, as they have been identified: *"lost economic output, provision of services, including health, legal, social and specialised; and the personal (physical and emotional) impact on the victim"* (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021).

An important step in the direction of preventing and combating domestic violence was the signing by Romania, on 27.06.2014 of the Council of Europe Convention on

preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011)). This approach continued with the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Law number 30/2016, this stage representing the beginning of legislative reforms that ensured the harmonisation of national normative acts, incident in this field, with the provisions of the Convention. On June 18, 2018, the Romanian Parliament adopted two very important draft laws in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence, which practically represented the real implementation of the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. The two projects aimed at amending and supplementing Law 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men (regulating the concept of gender violence) and specifically amending and supplementing Law 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence (with central pillar on the regulation of the Provisional Protection Order, in accordance with Article 52 of the Convention, the possibility of monitoring the Provisional Protection Order and the Protection Order by electronic system and the regulation of protection measures and social services for victims of domestic violence).

In Romania, the studies focused on the analysis of the dimension of domestic violence, and less on the analysis of the costs generated by this phenomenon. But an estimate of these costs was made in 2014 by the European Institute for Gender Equality, which estimated the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union. The report, methodologically, used two estimation strategies: the first strategy was to build up in detail, piece by piece for each of the main types of costs and the second strategy was to estimate costs at the level of the whole EU based on an extrapolation from the case of the Member State that has the best evidence to support the costing exercise (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2014). The report produced a European ranking of spending on discrimination and gender-based violence for each of the 28 EU countries (see Table 2 in the annex). In 2016, Ms. Andreea Paul submitted a parliamentary interpellation regarding the victims of domestic violence in Romania, following the publication of the report made by EIGE, she considered that our state *"can achieve an increase of 11% in PIB by 2025 by reducing gender imbalances in society at the level of European best practices"* (Paul, 2016).

## **2. Methodologies for assessing the direct costs of violence against women**

### **2.1 Research on the cost estimation, Romanian cases**

Taking as a model the Discussion paper-Finland, I identified both opportunities and challenges in estimating the costs of domestic violence against women, from the perspective of the data collected. In this sense I tried to estimate the costs using a bottom-up method based on data collected from public and private structures that have responsibilities in the management of social service provided to women, victims of domestic violence, superimposed on minimum cost standards established by the central authorities.

The responsibility for collecting and analysing data on domestic violence is distributed as follows: **"The monitoring department"** within the General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection from the county and sector level of Bucharest, completes the corresponding summary sheets and compiles statistical data on situations of violence against children and domestic violence<sup>1</sup>; **"Local Intersectorial Teams (E.I.L.)"** organised at the level of each county and sector of Bucharest (The Government of Romania, 2011)<sup>2</sup>, **"The National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men"** manages the national database on victims of domestic violence and aggressors who benefit from the provision of existing social services in each county" (Romanian Parliament, 2003)<sup>3</sup>.

Unfortunately, in Romania, no data is collected focusing on the cost of violence against women. In identifying the global costs of domestic violence, they were considered the following sectors: protection social, health and justice (see Table 6 in the annex). Calculation the cost of violence against women can be defined as *"financial evaluation of resources and of additional monetary and non-monetary efforts to be invested in the implementation of a law or policy to end violence against women; or the following costs to support their economy for lawlessness or politics"* (United Nations, 2013).

### 2.1.1 Cost standards for social services designed to prevent and combat domestic violence

Currently Law no. 217/2003 provides the following types of social services for victims of domestic violence: in residential regime and we find in this cases centres for sheltering victims of domestic violence (shelters) and recovery centres for victims of domestic violence and sheltered housing for victims of domestic violence<sup>4</sup>, and day-to-day social services<sup>5</sup>.

To set cost standards for social services designed to prevent and combat violence in the family, the following were considered: *"expenses with gross salaries of employees"* (the chapter "Expenditures with gross salaries and salary contributions of the employer" has been updated taking into account the data transmitted by the General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection, for all types of subordinated social services, on the increase of the salary fund over time November

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<sup>1</sup> HG.797/2017, the monitoring department from the General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection : „collects, processes and manages data and information on beneficiaries, public and private providers and the services administered by them”.

<sup>2</sup> HG.49/2011, EIL (...), „analyzes annually the statistical data made by DGASPC on: child abuse and neglect, children exploited and at risk of exploitation through work, children victims of human trafficking, children victims of other forms of violence in other states and domestic violence”.

<sup>3</sup> Art.8 (6) of Law no.217 / 2003.

<sup>4</sup> These centres provide accommodation, meals, psychological counselling, legal counselling, career guidance and other services according to the individualized needs of the beneficiaries.

<sup>5</sup> For both victims of domestic violence and aggressors with centers for preventing and combating domestic violence, centers for information and awareness-raising services for the population, assistance centers for aggressors.

2016 - November 2019); "*beneficiaries' food expenses*" (the regulated amounts for the food allowance were established according to H.G 903/2014); "*other direct material expenses*" (taking into account the average annual inflation rate for 2019, calculated on the basis of the consumer price index (CPI) and reported by the National Institute of Statistics as being 3.8% in November 2019, and the latest estimate made by the Bank National Bank of Romania, regarding the average inflation rate for 2019 as 4.2%, an increase of 4% was applied to the chapter "Other material expenses"). These standard costs do not fully reflect the financial need of the social service provider, being necessary the supplementation of funds to ensure cover of the beneficiaries' needs and quality services, but they are indicative to calculate an estimated cost of violence against women in relation to social services.

### **2.1.2 Data for domestic violence, services provided to victims in social centres**

In the social centres, the beneficiaries provide accommodation, meals, psychological counselling, legal counselling, career guidance and other services according to the individualized needs of the beneficiaries. In 2019, the 14.074 victims of domestic violence benefited from 40.835 services, and in 2020, the 11.607 victims of domestic violence have benefited from 33.200 services (see Table 3 in the annex). Some of the services received by victims of domestic violence have the costs covered by the centre where they are beneficiaries, for example accommodation, primary, social, legal, psychological counselling and even representation in court or obtaining medical documents attesting to the aggression. However, we cannot establish a standard cost of these expenses, because they are individually sized on a case-by-case basis.

### **2.1.3 Data for domestic violence, legal proceedings of victims of domestic violence**

Legal steps can be taken both in the personal name of the victims of domestic violence, but also by the authorities on their behalf. In this context, there are approaches that do not involve costs (filing a criminal complaint), but also others that have costs determined by the need to hire a lawyer (for example to obtain a protection order, evict the aggressor, child custody, divorce, increase allowance, child visiting schedule). The statistical situation shows us that in 2019 a total of 5.449 legal steps were taken, of which 424 were subsequently withdrawn, and in 2020, 4.109 legal steps were initiated, of which 290 were withdrawn (see Table 4 in the annex).

## **2.2 Challenges for assessing the costs of violence against women**

In Romania the data collected by the authorities may be affected by situations such as double registration of cases (given that the data are provided by several public and private structures), the reality of those declared by the victim, and existing services at the level of each county. It is also well known that situations of domestic violence are too little reported to the authorities, the victim chooses not to make it known (Zamfir & Zamfir, 2011). A plus of the case of Romania is that the data are centralized with a pyramidal aspect (see Table 5 in the annex), so in the situation of creating a unitary

database, there is national legislation that has assigned this competence to the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men. A minus of Romania's case is that there are still data that are not included in the statistics being treated globally, for example the expenses generated by the conviction of criminals, medical services, etc. The solution to overcome these situations would be for other ministries to extract the costs generated by domestic violence from global costs and then report them to the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men. Regarding unreported cases of violence, the solution would be campaigns to promote services for victims of domestic violence and increase trust in the authorities.

## 2. Conclusions and recommendations

Article 8 of the Istanbul Convention recommends that the state allocate financial resources and human resources for its implementation, but without a good knowledge of domestic violence, including the costs generated by it, we cannot talk about proper funding. In order to establish a multi-sectoral approach, it is recommended to identify a way to include the projected costs generated by domestic violence in classifying budgets, in order to track financial expenditures in all sectors with responsibilities in this area. At the moment, activity to prevent and combat violence in the family, are financed from the state budget, through local and county budgets within the limits of annual funds established, or from the budgets of private structures (NGOs). Ministries with responsibilities in the field of domestic violence should have the obligation to allocate funds specifically for this issue in their annual budgets. It would also be of interest to assess the impact financially.

Other recommendations include:

- A good understanding of the signs of violence is an important step in helping victims, who sometimes do not ask for help (to achieve this, it is important that professionals who come into contact with such victims be trained periodically, even simulating the interaction with these people who are sometimes under the effect of endless trauma);
- Development of a minimum package of services to be provided at the level of each locality, so that the victim can trust the authorities and ask for help;
- Better protection of victims in criminal proceedings, so as to avoid re-trauma;
- Identifying the best solutions for the protection of direct victims, but also collateral (for example children and the elderly or people with disabilities);
- Inclusion of collateral victims in statistics, who also need help and the development of support packages for them as well;
- Creating a medical code for diseases caused by domestic violence;
- Long-term social and medical monitoring of victims, so that the risk of re-victimization to be minimal.

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## Annex

Table 1<sup>6</sup>

AMOUNTS ALLOCATED BY THE STATE IN THE PERIOD 2006-2016 FOR "DOMESTIC VIOLENCE"			
1.	<b>Allocations from the state budget</b>	The National Interest Programme <sup>7</sup> , developed in the period 2006-2007, with a total budget of 1,080 thousand lei, through which were financed 22 centres for victims of domestic violence and 6 for aggressors.	Annex 1: <i>"Supporting the system of specialized services by financing in partnership projects for the development and maintenance of units for the prevention and combating of domestic violence"</i>
			Annex 2: <i>"Development of recovery and social integration services for family aggressors"</i>
		The National Interest Programme 2 <sup>8</sup> , developed in the period 2010-2012, with a total budget of 1,860 thousand lei, through which were financed 2 projects implemented in Vaslui and Alba counties, through which emergency intervention services and telephone lines were established	<i>"Intervention in Situations of Domestic Violence"</i>
2.	<b>Non-refundable funds budget</b>	<b>World Bank :</b> Loan Agreement no.4825RO between Romania and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development <sup>9</sup> , Program carried out in the period 2013-2014, with a budget of 931278.42 euros, through which 4 centres for sheltering victims were set up and a public awareness and awareness campaign was organised	The program for victims of domestic violence, part of the Social Inclusion Project
		<b>European Union :</b> Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development, Priority Axis 6- Promoting social inclusion, Major Area of Intervention 6.3 - Promoting equal opportunities on the labor market, carried out in	Project „START - a safe quality of life"

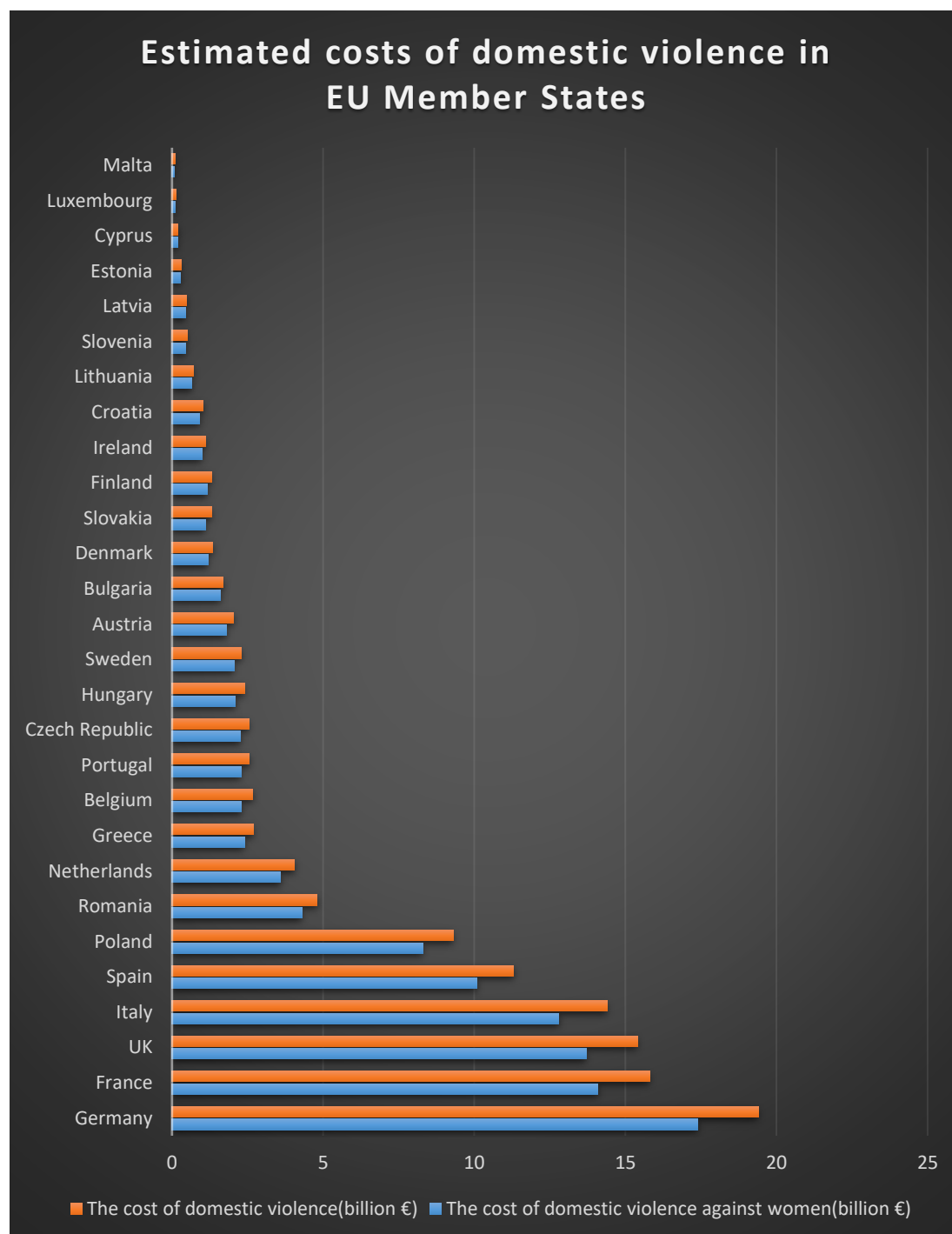
<sup>6</sup> Data source: Website of the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men <https://anes.gov.ro/>

<sup>7</sup> H.G. 197/2006 on the approval of programs of national interest in the field of protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as in the field of social assistance for the elderly, homeless and victims of domestic violence and the financing of these programmes.

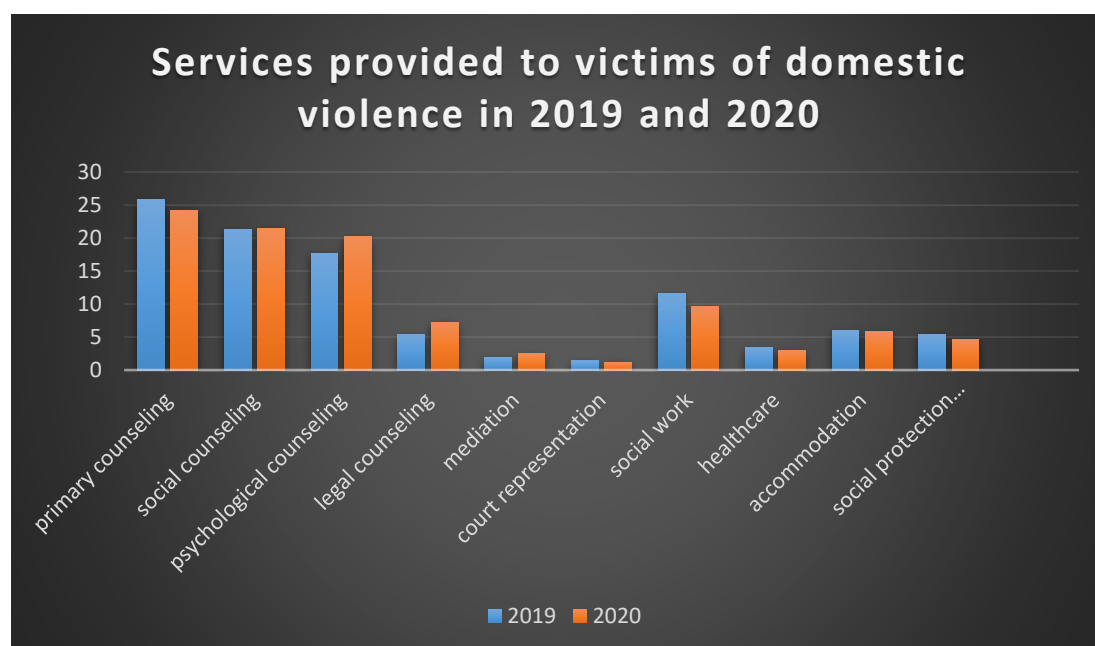
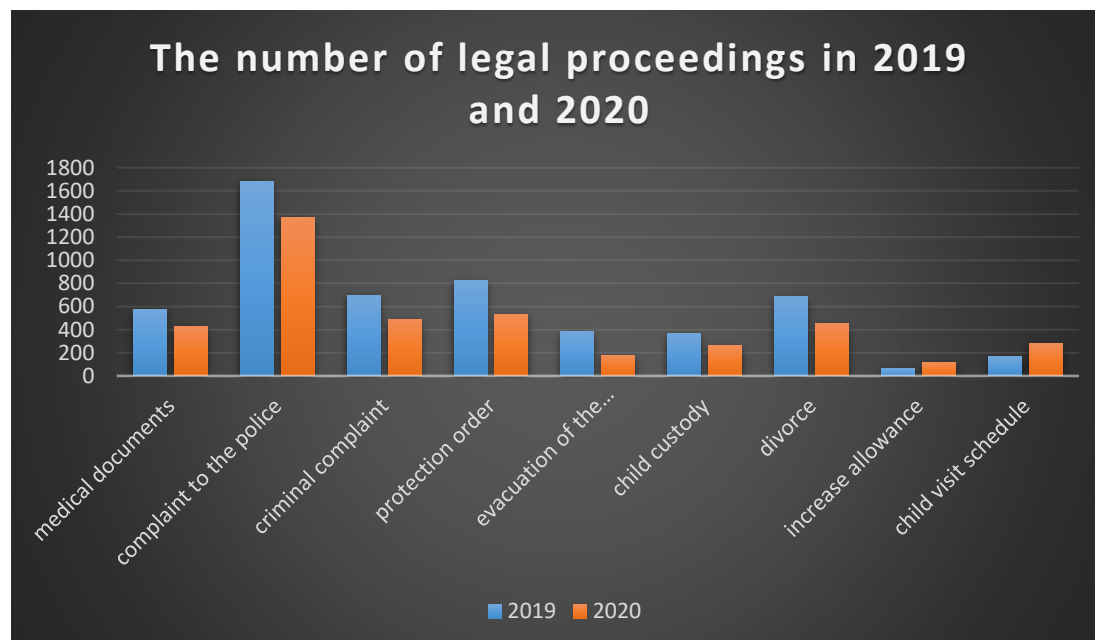
<sup>8</sup> H.G. 1007/2010 on the approval of programs of national interest in the field of family protection and children's rights for the period 2010-2012.

<sup>9</sup> Law 40/2006 for the ratification of the Loan Agreement between Romania and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, intended to finance the Project on social inclusion, signed in Bucharest on July 4, 2006.

		2014-2015, with a budget of 170,207,156 lei, through which they were developed integrated measures with a systematic and national approach to preventing and combating domestic violence and trafficking in human beings	
		<b>Norwegian financial mechanism:</b> RO 20 programme <i>"Domestic violence and gender-based violence"</i> , Carried out in the period 2015-2016, with a budget of 211,446 euros	The project "National awareness and public information campaign on domestic violence"
		<b>Project funded by program</b> <b>European Commission</b> <i>"Grants for support national activities information, awareness and prevention education and combating violence against women "</i>	<i>„JUSTICE HAS NO GENDER"</i>

Table 2<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Data source: Report of the European Institute for Gender Equality, <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/MH0414745EN2.pdf>

Table 3<sup>11</sup>Table 4<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Data provided by the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men.

<sup>12</sup> Idem 12.

Table 5

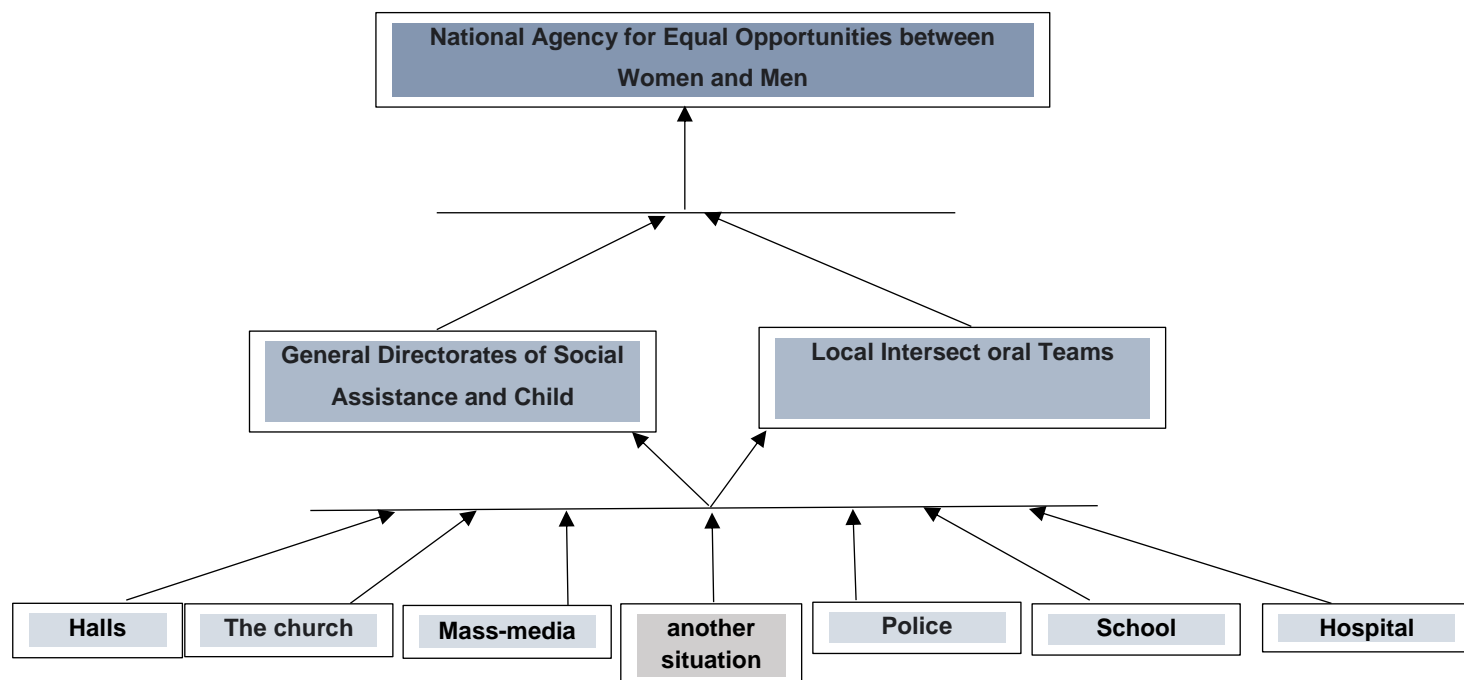


Table 6

Current no.	The costs generated by domestic violence	Remarks
1.	<b>Social protection costs</b>	Programmes violence prevention, social services for women with children, accommodation, primary, social, legal, psychological counselling
2.	<b>Health costs</b>	They can be endured by so many women as well as the state, these costs include the treatment of physical and mental injuries, hospitalization, emergency services, drug treatment.
3.	<b>Justice costs</b>	Supported by the state, these costs include services provided by police, prosecutor's office, court, lawyers, prisons, legal services, prosecution criminal and counselling, probation services.

4.	<b>Individual costs incurred by victims as a result of domestic violence</b>	Assumed only by the victims as a result of abuse as well as those covered in the attempt to have access to existing services (replacing lost or damaged household items, as well and the costs of changing residence or school).
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