



Success Story in 2013

Regional Campaign I SIGN

Project “Coordinated efforts – Toward new European standards in protection of women from gender based violence”



Within the project »[Coordinated efforts – Toward new European standards in protection of women from gender based violence](#)«, founded by the European Commission, in 2013 six women’s organizations, with support of a great number of stakeholders, conducted a media and awareness campaign about the issue of violence against women.

Serbia: On November 10th 2013 in Belgrade, [Autonomous Women’s Center](#) (AWC) organized international conference on [the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) (86 participants from 60 institutions). The conference had the effect on the exchange of information and direct impact on the governments and parliaments from 6 countries: Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Austria. Participation of representatives of the Council of Europe increased the credibility of the partner coalition. The symbolic signing of posters, carried out by all the representatives of parliaments and governments, as well as by *Mr José Mendes Bota*, General Rapporteur on VAW of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE, practically marked the beginning of the regional campaign “I sign”.



Mr José Mendes Bota, General Rapporteur on VAW of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

In Serbia, the campaign “I sign” has so far had the most support of various stakeholders outside the women's civil society organizations, as well as the great support of citizens. In addition to the media campaign, information materials were distributed at 34 street actions by 32 women’s CSOs in 31 cities. A large number of citizens participated, who supported the campaign with their messages and signatures. Partners organised 12 conferences and round tables and participated to 13 events organised by other actors. 8 representatives of the National parliament and 34 mayors, representatives of the executive authorities and local gender mechanisms signed the campaign poster at various public events. In a period November 6th to December 31st there were 100 press articles in the printed and interactive media. Representatives of the partner organisations had 51 appearances on TV and radio.



Some of the advocacy actions already have the positive effects: the standards of the Convention are included in the National Strategy against Discrimination; the Convention has become the basis for the development of a new provincial Strategy against domestic violence and gender-based violence (2014 -20120); the Ministry of Health accepted the proposal to initiate the formation of multi-sectoral ministry working group which would develop a special protocol for dealing in cases of sexual offenses and the establishment of rape crisis centers. AWC prepared a policy paper with amendments to the Criminal Code in relation to sexual offenses and the general comments to the Draft Law on Free Legal Aid.



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Slovenia: It is essential to highlight the fact, that media and awareness campaign, conducted by the [Association SOS Help-line](#), was the biggest in Slovenia since 1999. The campaign was captured by a number of media and communication channels for example: 150 billboards and 388 city lights all over Slovenia, 491 broadcasts of radio spot on 16 radio stations and one network, 2185 broadcasts of television spot on 6 TV stations on 14 different channels, 1.097.711 broadcasts of spot on LCD screens on buses, in shopping centres and in pharmacies. It is estimated that a television spot in the age group of 4 to 75 years of age saw 79% of the population, on average, person saw a TV spot 7.9 times. An indication that the campaign has been successful, are also numerous responses and expressed support from people, but also many testimonies of women who have or are still experiencing violence. The campaign messages were very direct, with an emphasis on the fact that violence is not a personal problem but a social one.



Austria: “I sign” campaign has made a significant visibility in Austria, where it was supported by the ministers and members of the Austrian Parliament.



Minister of Women’s Affairs Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek and Member of Parliament Gisela Wurm sign at an event for “16 Days against gender violence” campaign in Parliament on 2nd of December 2013
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Minister for the interior Johanna Mikl-Leitner signs at an event for “16 Days against gender violence” campaign in Parliament on 2nd of December 2013
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On 25th November 2013 in Vienna, Vanja Macanović, represented AWC and Barbara Stelmaszek represented [Women against Violence Europe](#) (WAVE) at the Symposium entitled 'Forced Marriages and Violence against Women in the Migrant Community' and 'The Istanbul Convention: A Model Treaty To Stop Violence against Women', organized by the Academic Council of the United Nations System (ACUNS) and partners. The symposium was attended by various representatives from the civil society, UN, EU and Austrian government bodies. Vanja Macanovic presented the joint campaign “I sign” and Barbara Stelmaszek's contribution was on Violence against Migrant Women and access to specialized services. The proceedings of the Symposium will be published in the upcoming months.



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Ms Dubravka Simonovic, a member of the UN CEDAW Committee

Croatia: On November 25th 2013 [Center for Women War Victims - ROSA](#) organized round table together with the Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality at the Croatian Parliament. This meeting was organized to present CoE Convention and to lobby representatives of political parties, representatives of Government and Parliament for ratification of Convention. More than 60 people attended this event, including several journalists. 19 speakers, representatives of Parliament, Gender Equality bodies, political parties, experts and NGOs discussed on the following topics: how Croatian legislation is complying with the CoE Convention, particularly criminal offences against sexual freedom in the new Penal Code; the process of signing and ratifying of the Istanbul Convention, on protection of women war rape survivors in Croatia; the situation and needs of women rape survivors; on existing practices in court cases of rape; and finally, the analysis on court cases of rape in marriage. This meeting was also used for launching I SIGN campaign. This campaign was presented to broader public and relevant decision makers on local and national level.



Macedonia: On December 27th 2013, Savka Todorovska, president of the [National Council for Gender Equality](#), presented the I SIGN campaign and talked about the need of ratification of the Istanbul Convention in the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, in front of the most eminent governmental and non-governmental representatives. The event was a public debate organized by the Commission on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, the Commission on Labor and Social Policy and the Women Parliamentarian's club regarding the preparation of a new Law on Domestic Violence. Beside the representatives from the Parliamentarian Commissions and the Club, other representatives present at the event were: members of the Macedonian Parliament, the Minister of Labor and Social Policy, experts, representatives from the non-governmental organizations, OSCE, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, WHO and EC. The debate was also transmitted on the national parliamentarian channel, part of the national television.



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Bosnia and Herzegovina: On November 23rd, launch day for the »16 day of activism campaign« in BiH, [United Women](#) organized a guerrilla action by sharing the information about the CoE Convention and I sign campaign. Students from Grammar school in Banja Luka joined this action and performed a flash mob at the elementary-school teachers' symposium. They presented a typical violent situation between a boy and a girl with girl being a victim and boy a perpetrator of violence. They finished their performance by showing the messages of the "I sing" campaign. Afterwards activists of United Women spoke with the teachers about the Convention, their provisions and invited them to join the campaign and share this information with their students and their parents. On the other hand, for the first time, teachers invited United Women to design a workshop or a group of workshops to present this information to their students and staff. Following this flash mob, United Women – as a part of the campaign to share the information and educate about the provision of the CoE Convention – initiated a series of workshops about gender based violence and violence against women in the elementary schools in the Banja Luka region.



Support the 'I SIGN' campaign!

Go on the campaign website www.ichunterstütze.org / www.potpisujem.org / www.podpisem.org / www.potpisuvam.org and sign to support the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention!

Change is only possible if we work together!



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