



Stop Violence Against Women Website

The Violence Against Women Monitor

A publication of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

September 2004

National Violence Against Women Monitor Program Begins with Orientations in Tbilisi, Georgia and Budapest, Hungary

In May 2004, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights and the Open Society Institute's Network Women's Program (NWP) launched a National Violence Against Women Monitor Program for Central and Eastern Europe, South Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and Mongolia. Regional non-governmental organizations in



Orientation Participants Solongo Sharkhuu and Nino Bakakuri

the fields of violence against women and gender equality will take on the role of National VAW Monitor and will facilitate the continued development and maintenance of the Country Pages of the Stop Violence Against Women Website (www.stopvaw.org).

Minnesota Advocates developed and launched the website in November 2003 in consultation with and with the support of NWP and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The website provides advocates in Central and Eastern Europe, South Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and Mongolia with comprehensive information as they develop strategies to address violence against women.

Minnesota Advocates and NWP conducted Orientation Programs in Budapest, Hungary and Tbilisi, Georgia for representatives of NGOs that will serve as National Violence Against Women Monitors for Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Lithuania, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Tajikistan and the Ukraine.

During the Orientation Programs, Minnesota Advocates and NWP provided the Monitors

with information about the website's purpose and organization as well as guidance in using the website's content management tool to modify and add to STOPVAW Country Page content. With these tools and with first-hand knowledge of research, advocacy, law and policy developments in their countries, Minnesota Advocates and NWP expect that the Monitors will be able to accomplish the following goals:

1. Enhance the capacity of individuals and NGOs who use the website to develop and implement effective strategies to end violence against women in the region;
2. Employ the website Country Page content and message forums as an advocacy tool;
3. Monitor government compliance with international obligations; and
4. Distribute information to the international community about their government's successes and failures in combating violence against women.

For more information about the National Violence Against Women Monitor Program, please contact Minnesota Advocates at stopvaw@mnadvocates.org.

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Electronic Version of the VAW Monitor Available on STOPVAW Website

The VAW Monitor is an electronic newsletter which is delivered on the first of each month. The VAW Monitor provides updates on the STOPVAW website, information from the National VAW Monitor Program, commentary from experts on violence against women, international, regional and national news, as well as updates on new reports and books. This newsletter is free. Please visit www.stopvaw.org/The_VAW_Monitor.html to subscribe to the VAW Monitor or to obtain an archived copy.

About STOPVAW

The Stop Violence Against Women website (www.stopvaw.org) is a forum for information, advocacy and change. Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights developed this website as a tool for the promotion of women's human rights in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Mongolia, and the U.N. Protectorate of Kosovo. STOPVAW was developed with support from and in consultation with the Open Society Institute's Network Women's Program and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). This website addresses violence against women as one of the most pervasive human rights abuses worldwide. STOPVAW provides women's rights advocates with information and advocacy tools focused on ending the most endemic forms of violence against women in the region, including domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment and trafficking in persons.

For more information about STOPVAW, please contact the Website Administrator at stopvaw@mnadvocates.org.

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

The mission of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is to implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law. Minnesota Advocates was founded in 1983 by a group of Minnesota lawyers who recognized the community's unique spirit of social justice as an opportunity to promote and protect human rights here at home and worldwide. We are a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that investigates and exposes human rights violations; represents immigrants and refugees in our community who are human rights victims; trains and assists groups that protect human rights; and works through education and advocacy in Minnesota to engage the public, policymakers and children about human rights and cultural understanding. Minnesota Advocates holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations.

The Women's Human Rights Program at Minnesota Advocates works to improve the lives of women by using international human rights standards to advocate for women's rights in the United States and internationally through research, education and advocacy initiatives. The Program's development of the Stop Violence Against Women website represents a continuation of the Women's Program's research, education and advocacy activities over the last ten years.

Network Women's Program

The Network Women's Program (NWP) of the Open Society Institute works to promote the advancement of women's human rights, gender equality, and empowerment as an integral part of the process of democratization. The program operates worldwide as a consultative and operational program, working directly with and providing technical assistance to entities inside the Soros foundations network on gender issues. Among the program's focus areas are gender sensitive education, violence against women, young women's human rights, mass media and gender policy, equal opportunities in the EU accession process, women's oral histories, Romani women's leadership, information initiatives, women's health, and women in conflict zones. NWP has supported the development of the Stop Violence Against Women website and the related National Violence Against Women Monitor Program. For more information about this program, please visit www.stopvaw.org/national_vaw_monitor_program.

To learn how you can support STOPVAW and its advocacy for women's rights around the world, please email us at stopvaw@mnadvocates.org. The Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is a 503 (c)(3) nonprofit organization.

STOPVAW News

New Section on UN Peacekeeping Mission Personnel and Trafficking

In recent years the media and human rights groups have criticized UN peacekeeping operations for contributing to the problem of global trafficking in women. In light of incidents in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo rights groups allege that individual peacekeepers who patronize establishments linked to trafficking networks do not face accountability for their actions. They argue further that UN missions have not done enough to actively combat trafficking networks. In 1993, the UN General Assembly approved a Code of Conduct for all UN peacekeeping missions, which condemns *inter alia*, "sexual, physical or psychological abuse or exploitation of the local population... especially women and children." While the UN Security Council has discussed developing disciplinary procedures for violations of the Code, as of today there are no means to ensure its enforcement. In response to the participation of UN peacekeepers in trafficking and the peacekeepers relative immunity before the UN, the UN missions and local police in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo have begun to develop local initiatives to curb the practice. STOP (Special Trafficking Operations Programme) in Bosnia-Herzegovina and TPIU (Trafficking and Prostitution Investigations Unit) in Kosovo are examples of such initiatives.

New Section on NATO Policy on Trafficking in Persons

The American and Norwegian ambassadors to NATO hosted the organization's first conference on March 4, 2004. The two ambassadors expressed concern regarding the absence of a unified policy on trafficking for the 46 countries of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. There is a recognized link between the presence of international troops within post-conflict regions and increases in human trafficking activity, and as such, the ambassadors urged NATO to create a policy to prohibit personnel on peacekeeping and reconstruction missions from participating in activities that support human trafficking. NATO issued a Policy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings on June 29, 2004. It sets forth a zero-tolerance policy towards human trafficking and mandates educational and training programs for NATO forces and staff. The two ambassadors suggested that NATO use their countries' codes of conduct and current actions against trafficking as best practices. Both countries maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards participation by military personnel in activities linked to human trafficking. NATO Resolution 323 on Trafficking in Human Beings addresses the problem and recognizes it as an affront to human dignity and as a threat to stability and security.

New Section on NGO Funding

STOPVAW has launched a new section on NGO funding opportunities for Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The website, www.stopvaw.org/NGO_Funding_Resources2.html lists organizations that provide funding for NGOs operating in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. If you know of any other funding opportunities that could be included on this page, please contact the STOPVAW administrators at stopvaw@mnadvocates.org.

New Section on NGO Databases

STOPVAW has launched a new section on NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe. The NGO Databases section lists searchable websites that list NGOs that focus on women's rights in the region. To access the main database page, go to www.stopvaw.org/NGO_Databases.html

For links to NGOs working on women's issues in a specific country, please visit the Country Pages section: www.stopvaw.org/Country_Pages.html

Updated STOPVAW Sections

The following STOPVAW website sections have been updated. Please go to www.stopvaw.org/Country_Pages.html to access:



Estonia



Czech Republic



Hungary

- Trafficking Law and Policy: International Legal Framework (plus subsections): www.stopvaw.org/International_Legal_Framework.html
- European Union Documents That Protect Women's Rights: www.stopvaw.org/European_Union_2.html

Expert's Corner: Minnesota Advocates Comments on New Domestic Violence Laws

Mongolian Law Against Domestic Violence

The Mongolian Law Against Domestic Violence (hereinafter, the Law) includes positive changes in legislation with regard to domestic violence. The Law articulates important principles on which it is based. Article 4 states, "Activities aimed at combating domestic violence shall be based on the principle of providing security to victims, prevention from possible violence, taking complete measures against violence timely, influencing behavior of offenders and strengthening stable family relationship."

The Law also states that the State shall provide shelter to victims and promote NGO activities aimed at combating and preventing domestic violence. Government funding of these activities is also addressed in the Law. The Law provides the important remedy of orders for protection. However, the Law also presents many potential obstacles to ensuring domestic violence victims' safety and offender accountability for violent crimes.

The Law contemplates a great deal of state intervention in cases of domestic violence, independent of victims' wishes or requests and without the involvement of advocates who work with victims and can best represent their interests. For example, Article 7.1 authorizes police, "To submit a request to the court regarding an issuance of temporary protection order or protection decision." Article 8.1.1 authorizes social welfare staff, "To assess environment in domestic violence might occur and define level of negative influence of the environment and danger jointly with police officers". Article 10.1 obligates teachers, medical personnel and social welfare staff to inform police of violence or "potential violence. Articles 14 and 15 authorize attorneys, social welfare staff and others to request an order for protection and Article 16.3 provides the court with authority to issue the order based on that request.

Provisions which authorize government representatives to make decisions about the issuance of an Order for Protection without the involvement of the victim may in some cases interfere with safety and other interests of the victim. A primary goal of government intervention

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Romanian Law to Prevent and Fight Against Domestic Violence

The Romanian Law to Prevent and Fight Against Domestic Violence (hereinafter, the Law) includes positive changes in legislation with regard to domestic violence but also presents many obstacles to ensuring domestic violence victims' safety and offender accountability for violent crimes. Positive aspects of the law include the following:

- The Law states that domestic violence encroaches on women's fundamental rights and freedoms. (Art. 2)
- The Law provides for the establishment of both public and private shelters along with social services for victims of domestic violence. (Art. 23)
- The Law allows for public subsidies for private organizations that serve victims of violence and directs government ministries to conduct research and education on domestic violence. (Arts. 7, 17 and 18)
- The Law allows courts to order that violent offenders leave the family home. (Art. 26)

The following provisions of the law present obstacles to ensuring the safety of domestic violence victims and the accountability of offenders for their violent crimes.

1. The language of the Law frequently focuses on the protection and support of the family rather than the safety of domestic violence victims and the accountability of violent offenders. For example, the first sentence of the Law Chapter 1, Art. 1 (1) states that it is in the national interest to protect and support the family. Art. 8 (2) states that the objective of the agency charged with implementing the Law, the National Agency for Family Protection, is to support family values. While the goal of providing support to families is admirable, there are circumstances where the Law's focus on protecting the family may not serve the interests of a domestic violence victim seeking to escape a violent familial relationship. Experts involved in drafting model domestic violence legislation recognize the importance of laws which prioritize victim safety. See the sections of this website entitled United Nations Framework for Model Legislation on Domestic Violence and

(Continued on page 5)

("Mongolian Law" continued from page 4)

in cases of domestic violence should be to respond to the needs of victims. This goal is not served by provisions in the Law which authorize government action and intervention in the Order for Protection process independent of the victim's wishes.

In addition, women who are victims of violence are most often the best judges of the dangers presented to them by violent partners. Therefore, it is not advisable to exclude them from decisions about how to handle a violent situation in their home. This is particularly true since we know that one of the most dangerous times for many women is when they separate from their abusers, which would occur, of course, upon the issuance of an Order for Protection as provided by the Law. A 2003 study described by the Family Violence Prevention Fund confirmed that "[s]eparating from an abusive partner after having lived with him, leaving the home she shares with an abusive partner or asking her abusive partner to leave the home they share were all factors that put a woman at 'higher risk' of becoming a victim of homicide." It is very important for a battered woman to make her own decision to leave a relationship because she is in the best position to assess the potential danger.

("Romanian Law" continued from page 4)

United States Model Code on Domestic and Family Violence.

2. The Law anticipates a great deal of state intervention in cases of domestic violence, independent of victims' wishes or requests and without the involvement of advocates who work with victims and can best represent their interests. For example, Art. 13 (1) requires that family social workers identify and keep account of the families where potential violent situations may occur and identify amiable settlement by maintaining contact with the persons herein. Provisions that authorize government representatives to independently make decisions about a domestic violence situation may in some cases interfere with safety and other interests of the victim.

3. The Law contemplates that victims of domestic violence need social rehabilitation. See Art. 8 (2) c and Art. 9 (1) j. In fact, many victims of domestic violence do not need psychiatric counseling or rehabilitation services. Rather, domestic violence victims need government agencies to focus resources on ensuring their safety through adequate provision of shelters and economic opportunities and ensuring offender accountability through adequate criminal laws and procedures.

4. The Law's reference to "conflicting parties" diminishes offender accountability for violent behavior and reflects an assumption that both parties are equally at fault for violence. (See Art. 16 c and e).

5. The Law's directive that state representatives counsel the conflicting parties to the purpose of mediation diminishes offender accountability for violent behavior and reflects an as-

sumption that both parties are equally at fault for violence. Art. 16 (1) e. It also may further endanger victims of domestic violence since, if seen as an alternative to criminal prosecution, it may allow for violent offenders to avoid criminal prosecution and sanctions for their behavior. Finally, as discussed in the OFPs and Family Law Issues section of the STOPVAW website, mediation is based on an assumption that both parties in a relationship have equal power to negotiate. This is usually not the situation in domestic violence cases and mediation may actually present additional risk of danger to victims.

6. The Law presents a risk that a domestic violence victim will be further victimized by the State by having her children taken from her. Art. 16 states that the state should report cases to institutions of child protection. This may unfairly penalize a victim of domestic violence and may also not be in the best interests of the child. For a further discussion of these issues, see the Role of Child Protection Services section of the STOP VAW website.

7. The Law does not provide victims adequate access to shelters. Art. 23 (2) states that victims may be admitted to shelters only in emergency cases or with written confirmation of the family social worker. By requiring an independent evaluation of the situation, the Law presents obstacles to victims who have decided that they or their children are in danger. In most cases of domestic violence, it is the victim who is best able to evaluate the level and immediacy of danger presented by an offender. For more information on this issue, see the Safety Planning and Safehouses and Shelters sections of the STOPVAW website.

International and Regional News

Draft Text of Council of Europe Trafficking Convention Now Available

The Council of Europe Committee on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (CAHTEH)'s first draft of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings is now completed and available to the public. CAHTEH aims at drawing up a European Convention on action against trafficking in human beings. This instrument is expected to be a practical tool of international co-operation geared towards the protection of victims' rights and the respect for human rights. It will aim at a proper balance between matters concerning human rights and prosecution and should build on the United Nations' achievements in this field in a European context. The Directorates General on Legal Affairs and Human Rights will jointly coordinate the work, expected to be finalized at the end of 2004.

More specifically, this document contains the draft Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings as revised during the 5th meeting of the CAHTEH held from June 29 to July 2, 2004. A previous description and some background are also available on our website.

In response, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) has started a lobbying action in relation to this draft proposal. The EWL is very concerned that the amendments proposed after the fifth meeting of the CAHTEH would weaken the aims of the Convention and limit its scope to another instrument to combat illegal immigration. The EWL has observer status to the CAHTEH and participates in its meetings. The next meeting will take place in Strasbourg on September 28 - October 1, 2004.

For more information on the EWL's action, write to centre-violence@womenlobby.org.

Latvian MEP Plans Ethnic Minority Group in European Parliament

Latvian MEP Tatjana Zdanoka is planning to set up a group for ethnic minorities in the European Parliament.

Ms. Zdanoka, who herself is from the Russian minority in Latvia, told news agency LETA that after the summer break she wants to get further with her intention to be at the "project stage".

However, at this point it is not clear which other MEPs would be interested in taking part in this ethnic minority group. According to Der Standard, the Latvian said she also intends to put the issue of the mainly Russian 'non-citizens' on the Brussels agenda. These non-citizens account for approximately one fifth of the country's 2.32 million inhabitants and enjoy no political rights in the country.

Ms. Zdanoka also wants to set up a European taskforce for minority issues - she is a member of the European Parliament's civil liberties committee and overall a member of the Green group.

Cited from: Latvian MEP plans ethnic minority group in European Parliament, Honor Mahoney, EU Observer, August 19, 2004.



Discrimination against Russian 'non-citizens' is a hot issue in Latvia
(Photo: European Commission)

The European Commission Launches Public Consultation on Anti-Discrimination Policies



The European Commission launched a public online consultation in order to engage the general public in the development of anti-discrimination policies. The consultation website, called Green Paper, includes the European Commission's analysis of the progress that has been made so far in the field. It seeks comments on how the EU can continue and reinforce its efforts to combat dis-

crimination and to promote equal treatment. Responses were collected through an online questionnaire. The public consultation period began on June 1, 2004 and ended on August 31, 2004.

For more information, and links to the Green Paper and Questionnaire, please visit the European Commission website on Anti-Discrimination, Fundamental Rights, and Civil Society (europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/index_en.html).

International and Regional News

European Organization Calls for Alliance Against Trafficking

A one-day meeting was held by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna on July 23, 2004, aimed at creating a broad Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons of international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in order to support governments to "more efficiently fight this modern scourge."

"We have to pool our forces and resources," said Helga Konrad, the OSCE's new Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and organizer of the event.

"Many good things - ranging from structural and institutional measures and collaborative initiatives to the development of comprehensive action plans at national levels - have been done and continue to be done," she said. "Yet, in spite of all these activities there does not seem to be evidence of a substantial reduction of human trafficking."

"So the question is no longer: 'What can be done about human trafficking?' but rather 'How we can do more and do it better'. There is no time to lose or waste," urged Ms. Konrad. For more information, see the OSCE's July 23, 2004 press release (<http://www.osce.org/news/>).

New United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking Named

Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has been named the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. In her thirty years of professional life, Ms. Johnson Sirleaf has been the Minister of Finance of Liberia; President of the Liberian Bank for Development and Investment; Vice President of Citicorp, Vice President of Hong Kong Equator Bank and a Senior Officer of the World Bank. Ms. Sirleaf has also served on different advisory boards and committees abroad and in her home country.

Compiled from:
Human Rights Commission Chairman Nominates Experts for Fact-Finding Mechanisms, United Nations Press Release, HR/CN/1100, 12 July 2004. Women's United Nation Report Network Newsletter, 2 August 2004.

Commission Goes to European Court of Justice to Enforce EU Anti-Discrimination Laws

The European Commission has announced that it is taking legal action in the European Court of Justice against six Member States that have failed to transpose two anti-discrimination directives. The Directives - the Racial Equality Directive and the Employment Framework Directive - prohibit discrimination on racial or ethnic origin, age, disability, religion and sexual orientation and were due to be incorporated into national law last year. Austria, Germany, Finland, Greece, Luxembourg have failed to codify both directives, and Belgium has failed to codify the Employment Framework Directive.

The European Commission's decision to enforce the EU's directives on racial equality and anti-discrimination has positive implications for another recent EU directive on gender equality, which strives to provide stronger support for employees who perceive that they have been treated unfairly by an employer because of their sex. Specifically, the commission's decision to enforce the directives on race and discrimination suggest that the commission may also act to enforce the gender equality directive when it is due to be transposed into law in 2005.

Sources:
"Commission goes to the European Court of Justice to enforce EU anti-discrimination law," Press release, Employment and Social Affairs Division, European Union, July 2004

New Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women Appointed

On August 12, 2004, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced the appointment of a new Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. Rachel Mayanja of Uganda, formerly the Director of the Human Resources and Management Division of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, will be the new Special Adviser.

Compiled from:
United Nations Press Release SG/A/884, 12 August 2004.
Highlights of the Noon Briefing, Denise Cook, Associate Spokeswoman for the Secretary-General of the United Nations, UN Headquarters, New York, 12 August 2004.

National News

Seminar on Domestic Violence Held in Tbilisi, Georgia

A seminar exploring the Duluth Model of coordinated community response to domestic violence took place July 29-31, 2004 in Tbilisi, Georgia. Representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Ukraine attended the program, which was presented by Michael Paymar and Rose Thelen from Duluth, Minnesota, USA. The seminar was sponsored by the Open Society Institute's Network Women's Program, and covered creating and implementing programs for both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. A complete outline of the seminar topics is included in the event posting.

Compiled from: Open Society Institute's Network Women's Program, past event posting, "Seminar for and about Victims and Perpetrators of Domestic Violence", 29 July 2004.

Azerbaijan State Committee on Women's Issues to Launch Anti-Trafficking Projects

The State Committee on Women's Issues in Azerbaijan plans to launch several projects designed to combat trafficking in persons. According to the Trend news agency (11.08.2004), the main project of the Committee will be the creation of a website which will enable victims of trafficking to contact the State Committee directly.

The State Committee believes that victims of trafficking who are not able publicly to seek assistance from governmental agencies might find it easier to seek assistance and learn about their problems through the website.

Together with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Committee also plans to implement a project on trafficking prevention. This project will begin following the visit of the OSCE Representative on Gender Issues to Azerbaijan.



NGOs in Uzbekistan Under Governmental Pressure

Women Living Under Muslim Laws has released a call for urgent action to ensure that women's NGOs in Uzbekistan can continue their work.

Since the beginning of 2004, women's NGOs working for women's rights have come under increased pressure from the Uzbekistan government. The women's movement in the country is now under threat largely because of its continued criticism of the government. The Uzbekistan government has proclaimed several decrees and issued secret directives to banks that have obstructed the activities of women's NGOs and at times made their work impossible.

According to the decrees issued, all women's NGOs have to re-register with the official Women's Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In order to release publications NGOs would have to apply for a special license, issued by a government official. In addition, all funds from international grants would have to be transferred to the Uzbekistan National Bank. The grants would then undergo investigation by government officials who in turn would determine whether the NGO can access the funds.

In response to current human rights violations, the United States government has announced that it will withhold security and economic monetary assistance to Uzbekistan. In its 2004 country report on Uzbek human rights practices, the State Department characterized the country as "an authoritarian state with limited civil rights." Uzbekistan could take several steps to show it is committed to improving the country's democratization climate, including "opening up the political sphere and ceasing the harassment of non-governmental organizations and media."

For more information regarding the urgent action appeal, please visit www.wlumf.org.

Compiled from:
Uzbekistan: Authoritarian Measures Against Women's NGOs, Women Living Under Muslim Laws International Coordination Office, 26 July 2004.
United States Cuts Off Aid to Uzbekistan, Eurasia Insight, EurasiaNet 14 July 2004.

National News

Romanian Law on Ethnic Minorities Likely to Be Adopted Next Year

Parliamentary representatives of ethnic minorities in Romania intend to initiate a bill for ethnic minorities. Although several laws already exist, no basic law on minorities has been voted for so far. Some still hope that the bill will be enacted this year, although 2005 seems more probable, as 2004 is election year.

There have been nine legislative initiatives on ethnic minorities in Romania since 1989, but they were either not accepted by all minorities, or were not discussed by Parliament.

One of the earlier ones initiated by the representatives of Romania's largest ethnic minority (the Hungarians), called the Law on National Minorities and Autonomous Communities, was introduced to the lower house of the Parliament in 1993 but was never discussed.

A new move came in 1998, after the Department for Protecting Minorities was set up by the Government in 1997, when experts began examining of minority laws in other countries in order to devise a Romanian version. The Interethnic Relations Department (DRI) of the General Secretariat of the Government also organized an international seminar on this topic in Mongolia in early May.

Out of the twenty officially recognized minorities in Romania, the numerically strong ethnic Hungarians have their own parliamentary representation, while the other nineteen are organized into eighteen parliamentary organizations (the Czechs and Slovaks share the same one), each of them having a representative in the Parliament as members of the Other Minorities Group.

The Minorities Protection Office, as well as the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ), consulted Hungarian and Serbian minority laws, as well as the European institutions and all the ethnic minority organizations in Romania in order to prepare the legislative initiative.

The new bill will most probably be based on an amended version of the legislative RMDSZ initiative of 1993.

Compiled from:

Áron Balló, "Law on Ethnic Minorities Likely to be Adopted Next Year," *Eurolang*, 12 August 2004.

Montenegro to Call for Talks on Dissolving Joint State with Serbia

Miodrag Vukovic, a leader of Montenegro's governing Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), said in Podgorica on 18 August that the Montenegrin authorities will formally propose to Serbia in September that the two sides start talks on dissolving the joint state of Serbia and Montenegro, which was launched in 2003 as a result of much pressure from the EU, RFE/RL's South Slavic and Albanian Languages Service reported. Vukovic suggested that Belgrade and Podgorica might review three options, starting with total independence. A second possibility might be to link two internationally recognized, independent states in an association on the model of the Commonwealth of Independent States that exists among some successor states to the former Soviet Union. A third option might be to remain in the joint state until 2005, when a referendum on independence will automatically take place. Under the terms according to which the joint state was set up, it will remain until at least 2005, at which time either or both republics have the option of calling for a referendum on independence. Among the major parties in Serbia, only the G-17 Plus party favors dissolving the joint state (see "RFE/RL Newslines," 2 August 2004). PM

Cited from:

Montenegro to Call for Talks on Dissolving Joint State with Serbia, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 19 August 2004. Copyright (c) 2004. RFE/RL, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington DC 20036 (www.rferl.org).

Gender Statistics Training Convened in Turkmenistan

On July 13 - 15, 2004 a training on gender statistics for central Asian countries was convened in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. It was organized by the U.N. Development Programme in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The objective of the training was to improve the production, presentation and application of data and achieve a better use of statistics for developing and monitoring gender equality policies. Please visit www.stopvaw.org/12Aug20043.html for more information.

New Research and Reports

New Resources Available for Child Welfare Workers in Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Cases

Two recent publications from the Family Violence Prevention Fund are designed to assist case-workers in helping families dealing with both child abuse and domestic violence. *Family Team Conferences in Domestic Violence Cases: Guidelines for Practice* provides guidelines for child welfare workers on the appropriate use of Family Team Conferencing, an emerging tool involving family and community members as well as other service providers in deciding how best to protect children facing abuse.

Accountability and Connection with Abusive Men gives caseworkers concrete information about abusers in general, and about sensitive issues of race, class, culture and ethnicity in domestic violence situations. It is designed to enable case-workers to better understand and connect with abusers, to hold them accountable for their actions, and to thereby improve the child welfare system's response to families experiencing domestic violence and child abuse. Esta Soler, FVPF President, noted that "(m)any families that experience child abuse also experience domestic violence. But we haven't done enough to support families facing multiple forms of family violence. As a result, these families often have enormous difficulty getting the services they need. These tools can make a real difference in ensuring that Family Team Conferences are used appropriately, and in finding ways to provide both sanctions and support to abusive men." (Cited from *Family Violence Prevention Fund News Flash*, 19 August 2004)

Both resources are available on the FVPF's website www.endabuse.org.

Compiled from:
Family Violence Prevention Fund News Flash, 19 August 2004

ABA/CEELI Releases Social Advocates Training Manual

In 1996, the Moscow office of the American Bar Association Central and European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA CEELI) established the Gender Justice Program in recognition of the fact that promotion of the rule of law in Russia must also include improving the legal status of women. Since then, CEELI has recognized that the lack of legal solutions to the problem of domestic violence is an area of critical concern in Russia and has carried out a number of projects which attempt to improve this situation.

The "Social Advocates" program is one of the most successful of these projects. It aims to increase the basic knowledge of local partner nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), activists, law enforcement, the judiciary and other government officials about the problem of domestic violence as well as other issues that disproportionately affect women in Russia. The program itself consists of a series of trainings, the goal of which is to create a group of advocates who are equipped with the fundamental legal skills and knowledge necessary to provide competent legal aid and effective advocacy for Russian women when the services of professional paid attorneys are unavailable.

Over the years, the Social Advocates program has become well-known throughout Russia and in other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). After receiving requests for basic information about the history, design and content of the Social Advocates training, the Gender Justice Program decided to create a simple resource containing the essential elements of the program. This manual (in Russian with the introduction translated into English) contains a basic introduction to the program, templates to each of the core subjects taught to the Social Advocates, written by the trainers, as well as sample materials referred to in the text. It is intended as a guide to those who wish to learn more about CEELI's Social Advocates program and to as a tool to adapt the program to their own needs. For more information, please see http://www.abanet.org/ceeli/publications/soc_adv_man_2004.pdf.

New Research and Reports

Book Highlights Human Trafficking Problem in Tajikistan

Karim Soliev, a staff member at the academy of Tajikistan's Interior Ministry, presented a book on 19 August with practical recommendations for fighting human trafficking in Tajikistan, Avesta reported. He noted that the Interior Ministry's Department for Fighting Racketeering, Kidnapping, and Human Trafficking has opened 14 criminal cases since its creation on 28 April. Frederick Chenais, who heads the International Migration Organization's mission in Tajikistan, told attendees at the book presentation that human trafficking is an increasingly serious problem in Tajikistan and Central Asia. According to Chenais, burgeoning labor migration provides fertile ground for human traffickers. He said, "Criminal groups are taking advantage of this and luring gullible people, especially women, into their network."

Cited from:

Book Highlights Human Trafficking Problem in Tajikistan, Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 8 August 2004. Copyright (c) 2004. RFE/RL, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington DC 20036 (www.rferl.org).

New Funding Opportunity Announced

A new funding opportunity put forth by the Central European University Center for Policy Studies (CPS) is now accepting applications for its International Policy Fellowships.

CPS is calling for proposals for its year 2005-2006 International Policy Fellowships (IPF) program, which is affiliated with the CPS and the Open Society Institute-Budapest.

The CPS International Policy Fellowships are intended to support the analytical policy research of open society leaders and connect these Fellows with professional policy networks and opportunities. The program aims to improve the quality of analysis in countries where the Soros foundations network by ensuring that these leaders are able to conduct research in their home region while maintaining local affiliations and a high degree of mobility and intellectual freedom. The product of each fellowship will be a detailed analysis of a major issue to be published in English and translated into other languages.

(Continued on page 12)

Amnesty International to Release Report on Human Rights Concerns in Georgia

As part of its ongoing series of reports on "Concerns in Europe and Central Asia, January," Amnesty International has released extracts of its upcoming 2004 version, which details its ongoing human rights concerns in Georgia.

Specifically, it documents incidences of excessive police force, torture and ill-treatment in police custody, implied persecution of religious minorities, and vague mechanisms of accountability. Anyone wishing further information on other Amnesty International concerns in Europe and Central Asia should consult the full document, which is scheduled to be released in full in September 2004. The extract on Georgia is available at www.humanrights.ge.

UNDP and UNIFEM Release New Report on Gender and Information and Communication Technologies

UNDP Regional Centre for Europe and the CIS and UNIFEM Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have announced the release of a new report, "Bridging the Gender Digital Divide: A Regional Report on Gender and Information and Communication Technologies in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States". The report examines the gender dimensions within Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and stresses the need to address gender inequality in terms of access to and participation in ICTs in the region. It also highlights the importance of ICTs as a mechanism to promote gender equality. For more information, please visit <http://www.stopvaw.org/20Aug2004.html>.

New Research Available

Three separate reports, addressing various perspectives of violence against women, have been released and are now available on the web as full reports or abstracts. The reports, released by the Family Violence Prevention Fund, Charol Shakeshaft of Hofstra University and Interactive, Inc. and Minority Rights Group International, address abuse among post-menopausal women, sexual miscon-

(Continued on page 12)

(“New Research” Continued from page 11)

duct among educators, and gender and minority issues, respectively.

- **The Family Violence Prevention Fund reports that Abuse is "Common Among Postmenopausal Women"**

This study is believed to be the first to estimate the incidence of physical and verbal abuse in a large sample of postmenopausal women.

- **Synthesis of Literature on Educator Sexual Misconduct Now Available**

Featured on the National Electronic Network on Violence Against Women (VAWnet) website, Shakeshaft has prepared "Educator Sexual Misconduct: A Synthesis of Existing Literature" for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary, Policy and Program Studies Service. Using existing available research, her literature review describes, among other topics: prevalence of educator sexual misconduct, offender characteristics, targets of educator sexual misconduct, and recommendations for prevention of educator sexual misconduct. Shakeshaft also offers several new recommendations that may be worth consideration, though they may present tensions with existing laws.

- **Report on Gender, Minorities and Indigenous Peoples Launched**

Minority Rights Group International (MRG) has recently published "Gender, Minorities and Indigenous Peoples," a report examining the intersection of gender, minority, and indigenous status. The aim of this report is to encourage those working on minority and indigenous peoples' rights to consider the issues from a gender perspective, and to encourage those working on gender equality and women's rights to include minorities and indigenous peoples within their remit.

(“Funding Opportunities” Continued from page 11)

Fellows will be provided with a one-year stipend, research-related expenses including travel, needed communications equipment, publication costs, etc. to work full-time on research of their design in one of the above areas. The amount of the award will vary depending on standards in the Fellow's country of residence and the budgetary needs of the proposal. *Online applications are due September 15, 2004.* For more details and information on how to apply, go to www.policy.hu/ipf/apply.html.

Calendar

- Committee on the Rights of the Child to Meet for 37th Session
9/13/2004 - 10/1/2004
The Committee on the Rights of the Child will examine the country reports of nine countries, including Kyrgyzstan and Croatia.
- Walk for Justice
9/19/2004 11:30 AM - 3:30 PM
Support and celebrate Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights' work by participating in the 2004 Headwaters Foundation Walk For Justice at Boom Island Park in Minneapolis!
- Human Rights Committee to Meet for 82nd Session
10/18/2004 - 11/5/2004
The Human Rights Committee will consider the State reports of five countries, including Poland and Albania.
- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to Meet for 33rd Session
11/8/2004 - 11/26/2004
The Committee will examine five countries, including Azerbaijan.
- Committee against Torture to Meet for 33rd Session
11/15/2004 - 11/26/2004
The Committee will consider the State reports of five countries.
- Promoting Women's Equal Participation in Peace & Security Processes: Operationalizing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Launch of Toolkit on Women, Peace, and Security
11/18/2004 - 11/20/2004
Created by International Alert & Women Waging Peace with host Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, USD, San Diego, CA
- Beijing + 10 - CEE Strategy
10/3/2004
Organized by the Karat Coalition with support of UNIFEM, in preparation for the UNECE Regional Preparatory Meeting on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in December.