

## COST GENERATED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

*Corina DRĂGAN<sup>1</sup>, PhD Student,  
Doctoral School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest*

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### ABSTRACT

*The study aims to analyze the evolution of costs generated by domestic violence during the Covid-19 pandemic in the Romanian space. The cost generated by violence is not well highlighted in Romania's budgets, however there are methods that may be used to quantify it. In our country, studies focused more on the analysis of the dimension of domestic violence, and less on the analysis of the costs generated by this phenomenon. However, an analysis of these costs was carried out in 2014 by the European Institute for Gender Equality, which estimated the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union. For this study I will use administrative data at the national level, which come from local entities with responsibilities in preventing and combating domestic violence. The study I propose will be an analysis of secondary data provided by authorities while also containing comparative methods (compared to 2020, the year of the Covid-19 pandemic). The results will describe the evolution of the costs generated by domestic violence during the pandemic, a period that worsened access to support services for victims of domestic violence. There are opinions that question the adequacy of the Romanian system in providing support to victims during the pandemic restrictions or to those who had difficulties in asking for help. Measures taken by the authorities to limit the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic were of general application, with specific ones having been implemented later, but even then their individualization was difficult, since each social field had a different response to this new context.*

**Keywords:** *domestic violence, cost, victim of domestic violence, Covid-19, budget.*

*Studiul își propune să analizeze evoluția costurilor generate de violență domestică, din spațiul românesc în pandemia de Covid-19. Costul generat de violență nu este bine evidențiat în bugetele României, dar există metode care pot fi folosite pentru a-l cuantifica. În țara noastră, studiile s-au concentrat pe analiza dimensiunii violenței domestice, și mai puțin pe analiza costurilor generate de acest fenomen. Dar o analiză a acestor costuri a fost făcută în 2014 de Institutul European pentru Egalitatea de Gen, care a estimat costurile violenței bazate pe gen în Uniunea Europeană. Pentru acest studiu voi folosi datele administrative la nivel național, care provin de la entitățile locale cu atribuții în prevenirea și combaterea violenței domestice. Studiul pe care îl propun va fi o analiză a datelor secundare furnizate de autorități, dar va conține și metode comparative (față de 2020, anul pandemiei Covid-19). Rezultatele vor descrie evoluția costurilor generate de violența domestică în timpul pandemiei, perioadă care a înrăutățit accesul la servicii de suport, al victimelor violențelor domestice. Sunt opinii care pun la îndoială adecvarea sistemului românesc în acordarea de sprijin victimelor în timpul restricțiilor pandemiei sau care au avut dificultăți în a cere ajutor. Măsurile luate de autorități pentru limitarea răspândirii pandemiei de Covid-19, au fost cu aplicabilitate generală, ulterior fiind implementate unele specifice, dar și atunci individualizarea lor a fost dificilă, pentru că fiecare domeniu social a avut un răspuns diferit la acest nou context.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Corina DRĂGAN ID ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5783-1396> e-mail: [dragancorina102@yahoo.ro](mailto:dragancorina102@yahoo.ro)*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *violență domestică, cost, victimă a violenței domestice, Covid-19, buget.*

Целью исследования является анализ эволюции издержек, связанных с насилием в семье в Румынии во время пандемии Covid-19. Стоимость насилия недостаточно отражена в бюджетах Румынии, но существуют методы, которые можно использовать для ее количественной оценки. В нашей стране исследования были сосредоточены на анализе масштабов домашнего насилия и в меньшей степени на анализе издержек, связанных с этим явлением. В 2014 году Европейский институт гендерного равенства оценил издержки гендерного насилия в Европейском союзе. Для данного исследования использовались административные данные на национальном уровне, поступающие от местных организаций, отвечающих за предотвращение и борьбу с насилием в семье. Исследование представляет собой анализ вторичных данных, предоставленных властями, а также содержит сравнительные методы (по сравнению с 2020 годом, годом пандемии Covid-19). Результаты представляют динамику расходов, связанных с домашним насилием во время пандемии, когда ухудшился доступ к службам поддержки для жертв домашнего насилия. Есть мнения, которые ставят под сомнение адекватность румынской системы оказания поддержки пострадавшим во время пандемических ограничений или тем, кому было трудно обратиться за помощью. Меры, предпринятые властями для ограничения распространения пандемии Covid-19, носили общий характер, позже были реализованы конкретные меры, но их индивидуализация была затруднена, поскольку каждое социальное поле по-разному реагировало на этот новый контекст.

**Ключевые слова:** домашнее насилие, стоимость, жертва домашнего насилия, Covid-19, бюджет.

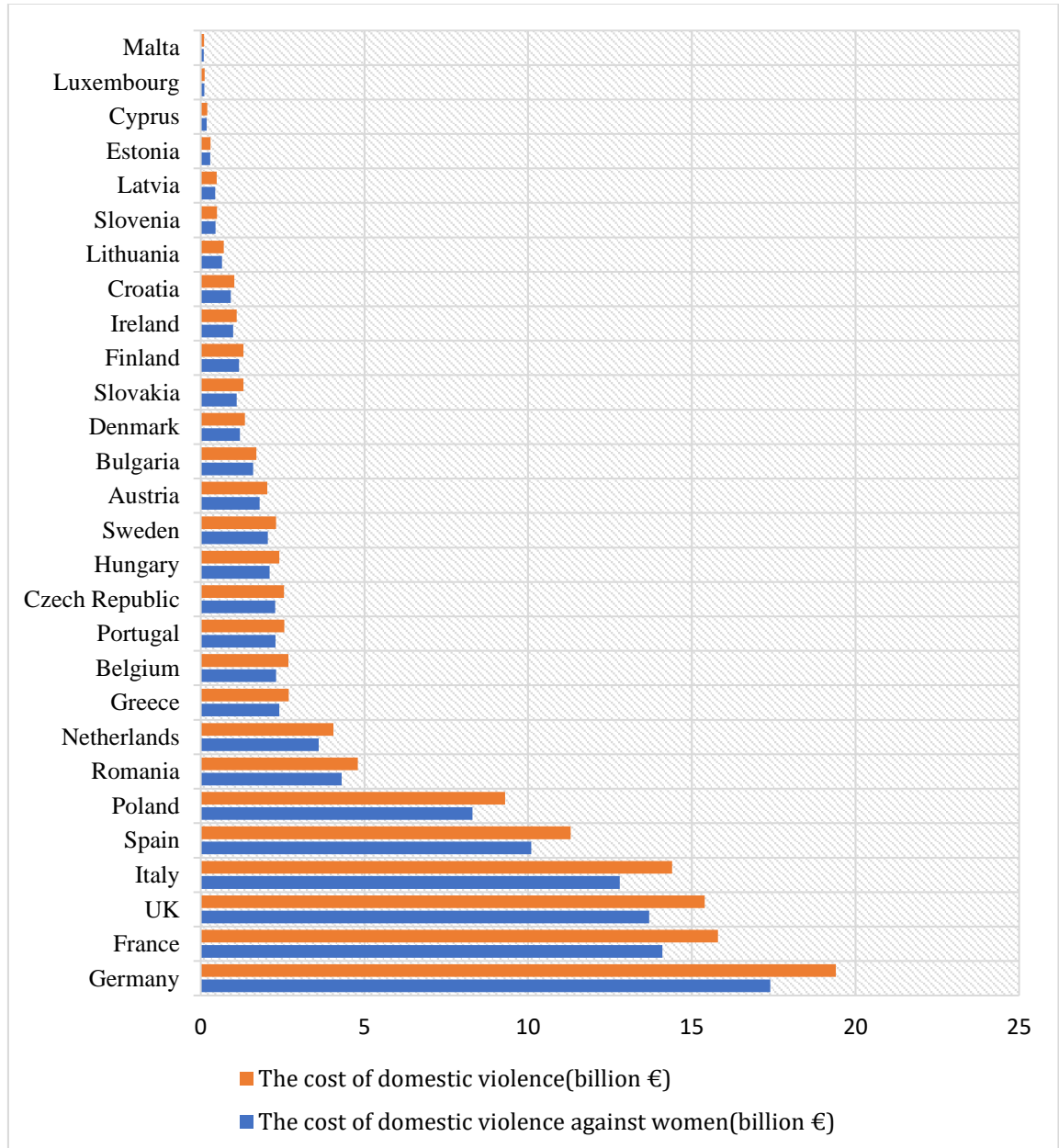
## INTRODUCTION

In Romania, domestic violence is defined as "any inaction or intentional action of physical, sexual, psychological, economic, social, spiritual or cyber violence, which occurs in the family or domestic environment or between spouses or ex-spouses, as well as between current or former partners, regardless of whether the aggressor lives or has lived with the victim" (Romani et al., 2018).

An important step towards preventing and combating domestic violence was the signing of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and domestic violence - Istanbul Convention) by Romania on 27.06.2014. The approach continued with the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Law no. 30/2016, this stage representing the beginning of the legislative reforms that ensured the harmonization of the national normative acts, incidents in this field, with the provisions of the Convention. On June 18, 2018, the Romanian Parliament adopted two very important draft laws in preventing and combating domestic violence, which practically represented the true 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 (which regulates the concept of gender-based violence) and specifically amending and supplementing Law 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence (with the central pillar on the regulation of the emergency ban order, as provided for in Article 52 of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence).

In the "Assessing the costs of violence against women in Romania" report (Dragan, 2021) it was mentioned that 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 analysis 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 methodological report used two strategies: the first was to build in detail, piece by piece for each of the main types of costs, and the second strategy was to estimate costs across the EU based on extrapolation from the Member State case which has

the best evidence to support the costing exercise (*The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality Methodologies and good practices on assessing the costs of violence against women - online - 7-8 July 2021, f.a.*). The report has compiled a European ranking of spending on gender discrimination and violence for each of the EU-28 states. (Fig.1).

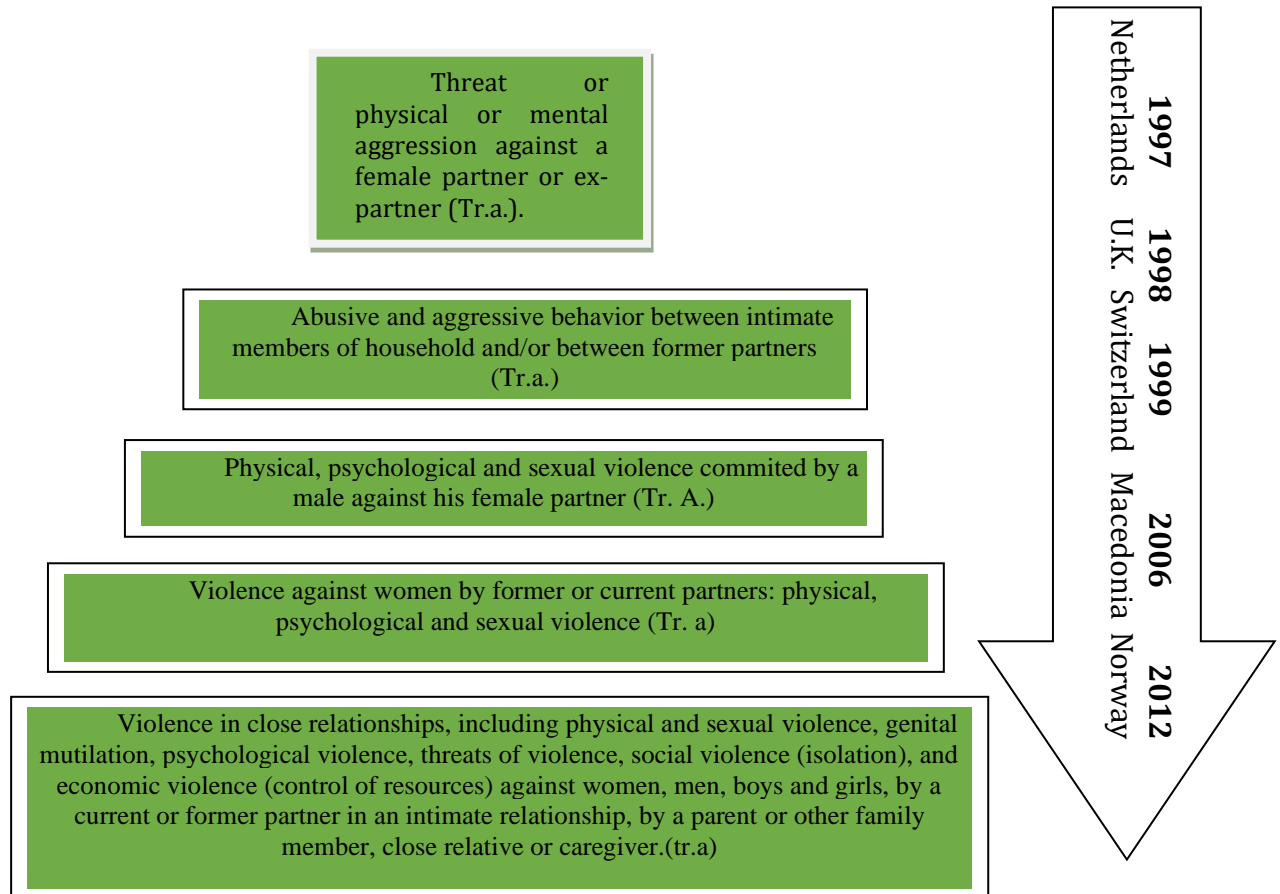


*Figure 1. Estimated costs of domestic violence in EU Member States*  
*Data Source: European Institute for Gender Equality Report*

### DEGREE OF TOPIC APPROACH IN SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

At the international level, the assessment of the costs of domestic violence has different approaches, being largely influenced by policies specific to the national and international context. Therefore, there is no general calculation model valid for all states that are interested in identifying this type of cost. For a better understanding of the situation at the international level, were analyzed the studies carried out since 1997, which tried to identify a model that could determine the costs generated by domestic violence as accurately as possible. The analysis of the studies showed that not

only the way in which domestic violence is defined has become more and more complex over the years, but also the way in which costs are assessed and even the cost categories have become much better determined or determinable.



**Figure 2. The evolution of the meaning of the term domestic violence**

### ***Dutch model in 1997***

The "*Economic Costs of Domestic Violence Against Women*" study conducted in 1997 by Dirk J. Korf, H. Meulenbeek, H., E. Mot, E. and T. van den Brandt, the perpetrators considered a certain type of violence, namely that against women and exercised by their life partner, and the situations identified referred to threats or other acts such as those of a physical and psychological nature.

The data considered in the study were collected between 1996 and 1997, and the information came from various agencies and service providers. He said that the data was underestimated because only the situations exposed by the victims of domestic violence that were registered by the shelters and support institutions were considered. In identifying the costs of domestic violence, it considered the following cost categories:

- medical assistance (family doctor and hospitals).
- psychosocial care.
- law enforcement (criminal justice sector and police).
- employment (medical leave).
- social insurance (payments of allowances/rent reduction).

### ***Swiss model in 1999 and 2013***

The „*Report of the Economic Costs of Violence Against Women*” Study carried out by authors Carrie Yodanis and Alberto Godenzi, in 1999 referred to the situation in Switzerland. The definition

of the type of violence considered by the report included the physical, psychological, and sexual violence perpetrated by a person against their female partner. Data collection was done through a national survey and official statistics provided by various sources. A 12-month prevalence rate of 11.3% was used to approximate the number of incidents per year. In identifying the costs of domestic violence, it considered the following cost categories:

- medical care
- support and counseling
- victim-oriented financial support
- criminal justice sector
- research

In their 2013 „*Coûts de la violence dans les relations de couple*” research report, Juliane Fliedner, Stephanie Schwab, Susanne Stern, Rolf Iten (Juliane et al., 2013), made a much more complex in relation to the study. The study includes violence in relationships between heterosexual and homosexual partners, both physically, sexually, or psychologically, and even integrates children as direct or indirect victims. Both legally constituted relationships (marriages) and consensual relationships (in the form of cohabitation) are considered and even if in the meantime a process of separation between partners has taken place. The report is based on official statistics and various other sources. The annual cost calculation was based on 2011 data, or an annual average. The most important sources of data were given by the police (from their interventions), from the centers and shelters that provide specific services, both at cantonal and federal level. The limits of their research were some gaps in the available data on legal proceedings, the transfer between health and social care, and the decrease or even loss of productivity. In some costing areas, the data collected relates to domestic violence in general, rather than partner violence. In such cases, it has been estimated that intimate partner violence accounts for 70% of all domestic violence cases. They also concluded that these calculations were most likely to be underestimated because they did not include all categories of costs due to lack of data in civil proceedings, child and adult protection services, support services for affected children, and health care costs for children affected and for men in terms of mental health services.

The report divides cost categories as follows:

Costs per sector:

- Police and Justice (Police, Prosecutor's Office, courts, criminal justice system)
- Victim and aggressor assistance services (Victim and Aggressor Counseling Centers, emergency assistance, financial compensation, shelter)
- Specialized and coordinating agencies (federal level, cantonal level)
- Health care services (Physical Consequences, Psychological Consequences)
- Loss of productivity: illness (paid/unpaid), disability (paid/unpaid), Death (unpaid)

Types of costs:

- Tangible direct costs (e.g., police interventions)
- Tangible indirect costs (e.g., loss of earnings, profit, and economic value)
- Intangible costs (e.g., loss of quality of life)

***Finland model in 2001-2002 and 2021***

Study was conducted by authors M. Heiskanen and M. Piispa, in 2001-2002, in the works “*The Price of Violence. The Costs of Men’s Violence against Women in Finland*” (Heiskanen, 2002) and “*The Costs of Violence in a Municipality*”(Council of Europe, 2012; Heiskanen, 2002). Both 2001 and 2002 studies consider the same type of violence: violence against women, with a focus on violence committed by the partner. The data used for the 2001 study was based on a survey of 7,000 women, an earlier study called "Faith, Hope, and Strike," conducted by the same authors. Other data sources were also: statistics provided by the government, databases and agencies' budgets, activity

reports, etc; interviews with experts to obtain the percentage of attendance at the support service for women victims of violence; two case studies. In terms of cost categories, there are considerable differences between the two studies, as follows:

2001:

- Direct costs: Health, including visits to the doctor, hospital care and medicine. Shelters, crisis services, social assistance, therapy, police, trials, prison.
- Indirect costs: deaths or those that use the human capital approach.

2002:

- Social sector: shelters, home services, childcare services, schools, emergency aid, social assistance provided by churches, family counseling clinics.
- Healthcare sector: including hospital and ambulance, patient transport and psychiatric as well as psychological treatment in health centers.
- Criminal justice sector: police, legal aid office, criminal prosecution, courts, prison, mediation.

A new study was conducted in 2021 by Heli Siltala and Tomomi Hisasue, in the *"Assessing the costs of violence against women in Finland"* country report (Siltala & Hisasue, 2021), held at the *"Methodologies and good practices on assessing the costs of violence against women"* International Seminar, Finland, 8-9 July 2021. Tomomi Hisasue of the University of Tampere and Heli Siltala of the University of Jyväskylä stated the methodological challenges for assessing the costs of domestic violence on how to identify all victims and assess direct and indirect costs, such as lost productivity, quality of life impact, even between generations in their paper. They noted that there is no perfect standard for estimating costs. Among the gaps in information collection, they identified that administrative data, such as hospital records, can allow for a long-term impact assessment, but inadequate medical coding systems and under-reporting are a challenge. In addition, the need to protect data to comply with GDPR standards can be very costly and time consuming. Surveys often underestimate the prevalence and cost of underreporting victims or not identifying all the services used. Study data included various measures for the use of health services, reflecting both immediate and long-term health effects. However, the study did not include costs for the justice system or the social services system. The cost categories considered in the study were:

- medical treatment for physical injuries related to violence.
- hospital stays.
- use of primary health care services.
- use of mental health services.
- medicines for mental health.

### ***Swedish Model, in 2006 and 2021***

This study was conducted by Elis Envall and Annika Eriksson in the *"Costs of violence against women"* paper (Envall & Eriksson, 2006). The type of violence considered in the analysis was violence against women by their intimate partner. The data used in the study were official statistics held by the Swedish National Council on Crime and Prevention, government agencies or structures funded or co-financed by local governments, the National Health Council and the Epidemiology Center's own welfare registry and even data obtained by applying questionnaires to women housed in shelters and crisis centers of local authorities. The cost categories considered were as follows:

- Expenditure of society for health and healthcare, police, prosecutor, courts, penitentiary, and social services, as well as costs for civil society (shelters for women and other volunteer organizations) and costs for business/employers.
- Expenditure of central government agencies to reduce the effects of violence and try to counter it, as well as all preventive measures.

➤ Expenses incurred by each woman victim for herself, her children and all those close to her, in the sense of trying to determine how these costs were affected in relation to the present or future situation.

➤ Indirect costs due to decreased productivity.

➤ Transfers, i.e., resource flows: sickness benefits, insurance, social assistance, and compensation for victims of crimes induced by violence.

Costs for dental services, medicines, mental health care, harm to children, pain and suffering were not calculated for the study.

A new study was conducted in 2021 by Petra Ornstein (Statistician) and Åsa Eldén (Sociologist), in the “*A coherent understanding of the costs of men’s violence against women*” paper (Petra & Åsa, 2021) presented at the “*Methodologies and good practices on assessing the costs of violence against women*” International Seminar, Finland, 8-9 July 2021. The paper analyzes the costs from the perspective of the value of a life without gender violence, to include the expenses of victims of violence, who will never return their previous ability to produce and participate, as well as their quality of life. Therefore, the cost categories considered by the authors in the study were as follows:

➤ direct answers / interventions of the company.

➤ loss of productivity by victims of violence.

➤ loss of quality of life for victims of violence.

➤ Freedom lost due to risk reduction options.

#### ***Model of Macedonia in 2006***

The main author of the study was Yordanka Gancheva, who in 2006 completed the paper “The Costs of Domestic Violence against Women in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: A Costing Exercise for 2006” The paper analyzed costs generated by domestic violence against women by former or current partners: physical, psychological, and sexual violence. The data used for the study were from official statistics and budgetary information sources; questionnaires sent to institutions dealing with domestic violence issues concerning NGOs and donors, which provided information such as budgets, number of services, number of victims registered, etc; interviews with public employees (social workers, police officers, prosecutors, judges), doctors (psychologists, dentists, gynecologists, etc.) and representatives of NGOs; interviews with 50 victims. The cost categories considered were:

#### *Estimated costs:*

➤ estimating costs determined by the criminal justice and the social system (personnel costs, costs for vehicle fuel and depreciation as well as some basic administrative costs such as communications, printing, copying, etc.).

➤ estimating the costs of the non-governmental sector, respectively the costs for the direct services offered to the victims, awareness through campaigns, training and policy making.

#### *Direct costs:*

➤ Social services - Social assistance centers and NGO services, including counseling, shelter, legal counseling, etc; telephone lines for victims of domestic violence, awareness campaigns.

➤ Criminal and justice sector - time allotted by the police to deal with domestic violence - registration of complaints, response to appeals, making arrests, time allotted for carrying out the necessary acts to judge the case, etc.; prosecution; the criminal court; civil court etc.

The analysis did not include the costs of the health sector, the costs of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs for monitoring and policy development, the costs borne by the victims themselves and a wide range of costs that were not measurable.

### ***U.K. Model in 2004 and 2009***

The study conducted in 2004 on the situation in the U.K., was conducted by Sylvia Walby, in her book "The Costs of Domestic Violence" (Walby, f.a.). The research estimated the cost of domestic violence through state spending, employers, and men and women who were affected by these situations. The methodology was based on the Ministry of the Interior's system for determining the costs of crime, including the specific costs of domestic violence. The cost estimate provided an additional perspective for examining the devastating consequences of domestic violence for both society and victims. The cost categories considered were as follows:

- Expenses from the criminal justice system: the cost of domestic violence for the criminal justice system (the largest component is that of the police. Other components include prosecution, courts, probation, imprisonment, and legal aid);
- Healthcare expenses: the costs of the family medicine system and hospitals, because of physical injuries, but also of mental health care.
- Social service costs: costs for children are higher than for adults, especially for those victimized by domestic violence and child abuse.
- Expenses for shelter insurance: Expenses for emergency housing include costs for local authorities and Housing Associations for housing homeless people due to domestic violence.
- Expenses incurred by the realization of the civil legal system includes both specialized legal actions, such as orders to detain or expel a violent partner, as well as actions such as divorce and child custody.
- Economic costs: medical leave.

Sylvia Walby is also the one who in 2009 conducted a new study focusing on the costs of domestic violence, the work entitled "*The Cost of Domestic Violence: Up-date 2009*" (Walby, 2009). The type of violence under study was domestic violence, in terms of physical, psychological, and sexual violence, both in relation to the aggressors who were current or former intimate partners. The data used for the study were cases of domestic violence registered at the level of central institutions, reports of the Department of Transport, information of the service agency, reports that include information on the degree of use of services by those affected by domestic violence, and the cost (per unit) of these services, the findings of previous research. The cost categories considered were those in:

- Services: criminal justice (police, prosecutor's office, courts, probation, and prisons), medical care (physical and mental health), social services (child-related costs), housing and shelter (cost of local emergency authority, housing, and shelter), and civil legal costs (costs of lawyers and orders).
- Loss of productivity and earnings for employers and employees: e.g., sick leave due to injuries related to domestic violence.
- Pain and suffering: based on the notion that people could be paid to stop suffering humanly and emotionally.

The study does not consider additional productivity losses due to stress and reduced performance, nor the long-term effects on children.

### ***Model of Spain in 2010 and 2021***

In Spain, Elizabeth Villagómez is the author of "The economic and social costs of domestic violence against women in Andalusia" (*The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality Methodologies and good practices on assessing the costs of violence against women - online - 7-8 July 2021*, f.a.) (Villagómez, 2010), a study that analyzed the costs of domestic violence in Andalusia in 2010. The type of violence analyzed in the study included domestic violence against women by an intimate partner or former partner. The data on which the analysis was based were obtained through a survey of 300 women victims of violence perpetrated by a partner or ex-partner. In establishing cost categories, the author developed a system of indicators on domestic violence, over 100 indicators,



structured around six criteria: severity and prevalence, impact on victims, risk factors, institutional and social response, access and use victim-oriented services and social perception and attitudes. The annual costs were:

- direct costs (resources used by victims)
- indirect costs (the value of goods and services that have been abandoned due to violence, affecting the well-being of the victim and society as a whole).

In 2021, a new study was conducted by authors Luis F. Rivera-Galicia, Elena Mañas-Alcón, María Teresa Gallo-Rivera and Óscar Montes-Pineda, in the paper entitled “Assessing the costs of violence against women in Spain” (Rivera-Galicia et al., 2019), held during the “Methodologies and good practices on assessing the costs of violence against women” International Seminar, Finland, 8-9 July 2021. The current data are obtained from the macro-survey on violence against women, which is the most relevant statistic on violence against women in Spain. It is carried out every 4 years since 1999. Since 2011 it has been managed by the Government Delegation for Gender Violence and since 2015 it has been carried out together with the Spanish Center for Sociological Research. The study includes:

- tangible direct costs (related to the monetary value of goods and services, expenses for the prevention and treatment of the effects of violence).
- tangible indirect costs (referring to resources that are lost due to reduced economic activity or loss of income due to higher inactivity of women or unemployment caused by sexual violence).

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#### ***Mode of Denmark in 2010 and 2021***

The study was conducted by Karin Helweg-Larsen, Marie Kruse, Jan Sørensen and Henrik Brønnum-Hansen in 2010, and was entitled "*The Cost of Violence: Economic and Personal Dimensions of Violence Against Women in Denmark*" (Kruse et al., 2011). The study includes two samples of the population of women exposed to violence: the sample was obtained from data based on 20,482 women aged 16-64, who in the 2002-2005 period reported a situation of violence to the police or died because of the violence and/or contacted the emergency department because of the violence. Also including women in shelters who report cases of violence to the police or have contacted the Emergency Department; the second sample is based on data provided by the Danish Health System and a Morbidity Surveys in 2000 and 2005, which included questions about exposure to violence in the last 12 months. In addition, data on the socio-economic condition, contacts with healthcare and the consequences on the labor market and data recorded by social services were introduced. The cost categories considered were:

- Costs of the judicial system of the police, in situations reported as violence against women: consumption of time at the police, prosecutor's office and courts combined with specific salaries and court fees, as well as prison and court fees.
- Crisis center costs: shelter rates and number of accommodations per year.
- Costs for society: including the national budget allocated to initiatives initiated under the Danish national action plans to combat violence against women, 2002-2009.

In 2021, Marie Kruse returns with a new study, entitled “Data on the cost of violence and identification of violence victims in Denmark”(Kruse et al., 2011), held at the “Methodologies and good practices on assessing the costs of violence against women” International Seminar, Finland, 8-9 July 2021. The study makes recommendations on how to quantify the costs of domestic violence, so:

- by using a comparison group so that unrelated costs are not falsely considered the costs of violence.
- by applying a longer time horizon, the costs of violence are often borne later. The period should be of at least 1-2 years, and the analysis should also include the effects on children and general health for a much longer timespan.

- mentioning self-reported violence which is very different from violence recorded by emergencies, shelters, and police.
- mentioning gender-based violence which is equally important and therefore data for both genders should be collected to allow comparison between men and women. More men than women are victims of violence, but violence against men is of a different nature (most often by a stranger).

### ***Model of France in 2010***

The study was conducted in 2012 by Marc Nectoux, Claude Mugnier, S Baffert, Bertrand Thélot as well as M. Albagli and is entitled "*An Economic Evaluation of Intimate Partner Violence in France*" (Nectoux et al., 2010). Direct costs were analyzed through: a micro-level analysis based on interviews with experts (responsible for childcare and accommodation, telephone helplines, departmental observatory for combating partner violence); at the mid-level they used data from national medical facilities, social, administrative and legal records (institutional reports, national registers) and allowed a national cost estimate; and at the macro level by exploiting national and international economic databases (public spending budgets on health, justice and police, social services, economic cost and GDP, taken from EUROSTAT). The cost categories considered for analysis were:

- Loss of social utility generated by violence.
- Costs for the health system: Direct medical costs (drug use, consultations, etc.).
- Costs for the forensic and social sector: use of police and justice (budget of penitentiary administration, police, and criminal proceedings related to convictions); use of social services (costs related to shelters in the case of a separated couple, housing benefits, benefits for single parents, costs related to termination of employment, situation directly attributed to intimate partner violence).
  - Loss of productivity: loss of production due to deaths, incarceration, and absenteeism.
  - Loss of quality of life: psychological and human costs, human costs of rape and injuries (the phenomenon of deteriorating daily quality of life of women victims of mood disorders, intense fatigue, sleep problems, costs of indirect effects through a decrease in future income caused declining productivity (disability, death), costs related to declining living standards resulting from separation and intangible costs).

### ***Model of Norway in 2012***

The report was co-authored by Ingeborg Rasmussen, Steinar Strøm, Sidsel Sverdrup and Haakon Vennemo, and the title of the paper was "*Samfunnsøkonomiske kostnader av vold i nære relasjoner*" (Rasmussen et al., f.a.). The report covered the following types of violence: domestic violence, including physical and sexual violence, genital mutilation, psychological violence, threats of violence, social violence (isolation) and economic violence (resource control), violence against women, men, boys, girls, violence perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner in a relationship, by a parent or other family member, close relative, or caregiver. Data used in the report are obtained from estimates from official statistics and budgetary information sources from 2010. The study uses data from the legal field (police, justice, criminal justice, legal aid), health sector (emergency care, long-term care) as well as in the social sector (support services and social benefits). Crime Victims, Children's Advocacy Centers and NGOs. The authors concluded that the calculations are most likely to be underestimated due to underreporting domestic violence and difficulty in estimating socioeconomic costs. The cost categories were as follows:

- Costs per sector:
  - Police;

- Justice (Prosecutor's Office, Children's Law Centers, Courts, Correctional Services, Mediation);
- Health care services (medical care, psychological care);
- Support services (Crisis Centers, Family Therapy Centers, Child Protection Service, Treatment Centers, Telephone Helpline);
- Education and training (Norwegian Center for Violence and Traumatic Stress, Regional Center for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention, Research Funding);
- Other ministries and state institutions (Ministry of Health and Care Services, Directorate of Health, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Directorate of Children, Youth and Family, Business, Ministry of Justice);
  - Taxes (marginal cost of public funds);
  - Loss of labor productivity (inability to work);
  - Lives lost.

At European level, there has been a growing interest in domestic violence following the adoption of the European Parliament Resolution of 26 November 2009 on the Elimination of Violence against Women. The studies revealed to the authorities the economic dimension of the phenomenon of domestic violence, but also the negative social repercussions, which entail imbalances at individual, group or even community level. Studies have also shown that in assessing the costs of violence, we must not limit ourselves only to the direct costs, which are quite well highlighted by the authorities through the statistical data they have, but also indirect costs, which are equally important and may have medium- and long-term implications.

### **PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**

At European level, there was a growing interest in domestic violence following the adoption of the European Parliament Resolution of 26 November 2009 on the Elimination of Violence against Women. The studies revealed to the authorities the economic dimension of the phenomenon of domestic violence, but also the negative social repercussions, which entail imbalances at individual, group or even community level. Studies have also shown that in assessing the costs of violence, we must not limit ourselves only to the direct costs, which are quite well highlighted by the authorities through the statistical data they have, but also indirect costs, which are equally important and may have medium and long term implications, as stated by Zamfir Elena “in the conditions of severe limitation of financial and human resources, a correct prioritization of needs was extremely important for active measures to reduce and prevent new social risks for vulnerable people and groups” The negative effects of the phenomenon of domestic violence are extremely difficult to identify on a personal level, primarily on the background of poor education, a situation that leads to a poor understanding of individual rights, but also a poor promotion of services that may benefit victims of such crime. In Romania, most social services dedicated to victims of domestic violence are public and are either subordinated to the General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection at county level/sectors of Bucharest or subordinated to the Public Directorates of Social Assistance at the level of town halls or are private and are managed by economic operators or non-governmental organizations licensed as such service providers. These services are not uniformly located in the territory, in the sense that we do not find a minimum package of support services for victims of domestic violence, which can be accessed in each locality. They were set up according to the budgets of each Territorial Administrative Unit, but also to the potential to access dedicated lines with European funding (<http://ithub.gov.ro/2016/11/25/harta-serviciilor-sociale-licentiate/>). Unfortunately, this situation has created discrimination, being of course advantaged in relation to the ease of accessibility of services, victims of domestic violence who live in urban areas, even large urban (municipalities) that offer most, but also the most diverse dedicated social support services

dedicated (counseling and information centers, shelters, sheltered housing, emergency reception centers, recovery centers for victims of domestic violence, etc.).

### METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Starting from the cost analysis models of other authors mentioned in the first part of the study, I was able to outline my own research methodology, which would be based on the system of social support services at the national level. The analysis considers only the direct costs, the indirect ones to be analyzed in another research. Therefore, this research will be quantitative and will follow the previously mentioned analysis models, focusing on direct, tangible costs, related to the expenses incurred by the services for treatment/removal of the effects of violence, provided through licensed social structures, according to law, in this purpose. This study will not cover the costs of preventing domestic violence.

In Romania, it is very difficult to use a model for estimating the costs caused by domestic violence. However, in the social sector there is a system of centralization of cases of domestic violence, through a bottom-up transmission, respectively from the local level to the level of the central structures. At the same time, we can estimate the costs in the case report, given the fact that all the social services provided to victims of domestic violence were standardized by Government Decision no. 426 of 27 May 2020 on the approval of cost standards for social services.

To determine the structures that have such attributions of data collection and transmission, we studied the national legislation, as well as the organization and functioning regulations according to Table 1.

**Table 1**

#### List of structures and authorities responsible for collecting data in the field of domestic violence

No.	Structure name	Structure type	Legal provision
1.	<b>General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection</b>	Structure with legal personality at county level	<b>GD no.49/2011</b> (Government of Romania, 2011): „employees of the monitoring department within the D.G.A.S.P.C. complete the appropriate summary sheets (for example, the summary sheet for child abuse and neglect, the summary sheet for cases of labor exploitation and children at risk of labor exploitation, sexual exploitation, child trafficking, summary sheet cases of child trafficking, domestic and cross-border) and send them to the MLFPS - DGPC; based on the summary sheets, compiles statistical data on situations of violence against children and domestic violence;” <b>G.D. no. 797/2017</b> (Government of Romania, 2017) „8. compiles the database regarding the cases of domestic violence and reports at county level and respectively at the level of the sectors of the Bucharest municipality and reports these data quarterly to the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men;”
2.	<b>Local Intersectoral Teams</b>	County level structures, without legal personality, constituted by County Council decisions, whose members can be: 1. General Directorate of Social Work and	<b>G.D. no .49/2011</b> (Government of Romania, 2011) „c) annually analyzes statistical data compiled by the D.G.A.S.P.C. on child abuse and neglect, children exploited and at risk of labor exploitation, children victims of trafficking in persons, children victims of other forms of violence in other states and domestic violence” „e) prepares biannual reports on the activity in the field of prevention and combating violence against children and domestic violence, based on the analysis of statistical

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		<p>Child Protection (DGASPC);</p> <p>2. county police inspectorate/General Police Directorate of the Bucharest Municipality and sectoral police units;</p> <p>3. the county gendarmerie inspectorate/General Directorate of Gendarmes of the Bucharest Municipality;</p> <p>4. county public health directorate/Bucharest Municipality Public Directorate;</p> <p>5. county school inspectorate/ Bucharest Municipality General School Inspectorate;</p> <p>6. Territorial Labor Inspectorate;</p> <p>7. non-governmental organizations.</p>	<p>data, good practices collected and other relevant information;”</p>
3.	<p><b>National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoption</b></p>	<p>Central level structure, with legal personality, subordinated to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection</p>	<p><b>G.D. no.49/2011</b> (Government of Romania, 2011)</p> <p>c) At central level, the M.M.F.P.S. - D.G.P.C. has the following obligations: 1. centralizes data received from the D.G.A.S.P.C. on the whole issue of violence against children, based on the above-mentioned summary sheets; 2. prepares annual reports on child violence and domestic violence, based on E.I.L. and of the monitoring compartments within the D.G.A.S.P.C .; 3. Contributes to the preparation of country reports on various forms of violence against children and domestic violence; 4. makes proposals for changes in legislation and policies in the field.</p> <p><b>G.D. no. 1002/2019 art.4</b></p> <p>„g) collects, processes and disseminates statistical data in the areas of competence;”</p>
4.	<p><b>National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men</b></p>	<p>Central level structure, with legal personality, subordinated to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection</p>	<p><b>G.D. no.177/2016</b> (Government of Romania, 2016)</p> <p>Art.4</p> <p>„d) collects statistical data according to Law no. 226/2009 on Organization and functioning of official statistics in Romania, as subsequently amended and supplemented, prepares reports, studies, analyzes and forecasts on applying the principle of equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, in all areas of activity;”</p>

According to regulations in force, in Romania, any natural or legal person can report the existence of a situation of domestic violence. The General Directorates of Social Work and Child Protection (D.G.A.S.P.C.) at county level and respectively each sector of Bucharest, through the

“domestic violence department” (Government of Romania, 2017), have attributions such as “identify risk situations for the parties involved in violence situations domestic and directs the parties to specialized/mediation services; compiles the database on cases of domestic violence at county level, respectively at the level of the sectors of the Bucharest municipality and reports these data quarterly to the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (...)”. Through this study we identified several limitations of the system for collecting data on cases of domestic violence:

➤ Public and private structures at local and county level transmit these data to D.G.A.S.P.C. which centralizes them, but due to the General Data Protection Regulation, there is no victim identification data, so sometimes the same victim can be reported by several structures (for example a victim can report to the police about her situation, can benefit medical or social support, and the DGASPC may register the case three times, even if it is the same victim);

➤ Data is interpreted and collected differently from a D.G.A.S.P.C. to another (there is no unitary practice of understanding the reporting methodology).

➤ Data are insufficient and do not reveal much information on medium and long term situation of victims, nor data on costs of domestic violence information collected: distribution of victims of domestic violence (cases) by age groups, sexes, home; distribution of victims of domestic violence (cases) by citizenship and ethnicity; distribution of victims of domestic violence (cases) by level of education, in the reported period; distribution of victims of domestic violence (cases) by occupation, income and ownership of the home, during the reported period; distribution of victims of domestic violence (cases) by marital status, during the reported period; distribution of victims of domestic violence (cases) according to the victim's relationship with the family aggressor, during the reported period; distribution of victims of domestic violence (cases) by type of violence, in the reported period; distribution of victims of domestic violence (cases) by types of violence according to the frequency of aggression, during the reported period; services benefited by victims of domestic violence; legal proceedings initiated or withdrawn by victims of domestic violence during the reported period; risk associated with domestic violence during the reported period.

In this study, we chose to only estimate the costs of accessing housing services for victims of domestic violence, using data collected on *services that benefited victims of domestic violence - housing*. However, the accommodation is seen as a complex of services that benefit the victims and not just housing. The cost standard provided by H.G. 426/2020 for residential centers is established differently depending on the type of service provided respectively:

- for emergency centers (Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, 2019) (shelters) - the standard cost/year/beneficiary is 26,775 lei;

- for recovery centers for victims of domestic violence (Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, 2019) - the standard cost/year/beneficiary is 34,167 lei;

- for sheltered housing for victims of domestic violence (Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, 2019) - the standard cost/year/beneficiary is 34,167 lei.

Because the data collected does not specifically identify in which type of residential center the victim was housed, we estimated the cost/victim/accommodation as an average of the cost standard for the three types of centers mentioned above, resulting in a cost average of 31,703 lei.

$$\text{Average cost/center/year} = \frac{\text{CPRU} + \text{CRVVF} + \text{LP}}{3} = \frac{26775 + 34167 + 34167}{3} = 31.703 \text{ lei}$$

In analyzing annual costs, we multiplied the number of cases per year by the average cost standard for residential (hosting) centers, using the calculation formula below and where CVD is the cost of domestic violence per year, CV represents the number of cases, CPRU represents the cost standard for the emergency reception center, CRVVF represents the cost standard for the recovery center for victims of domestic violence, and LP represents the cost standard for sheltered housing.

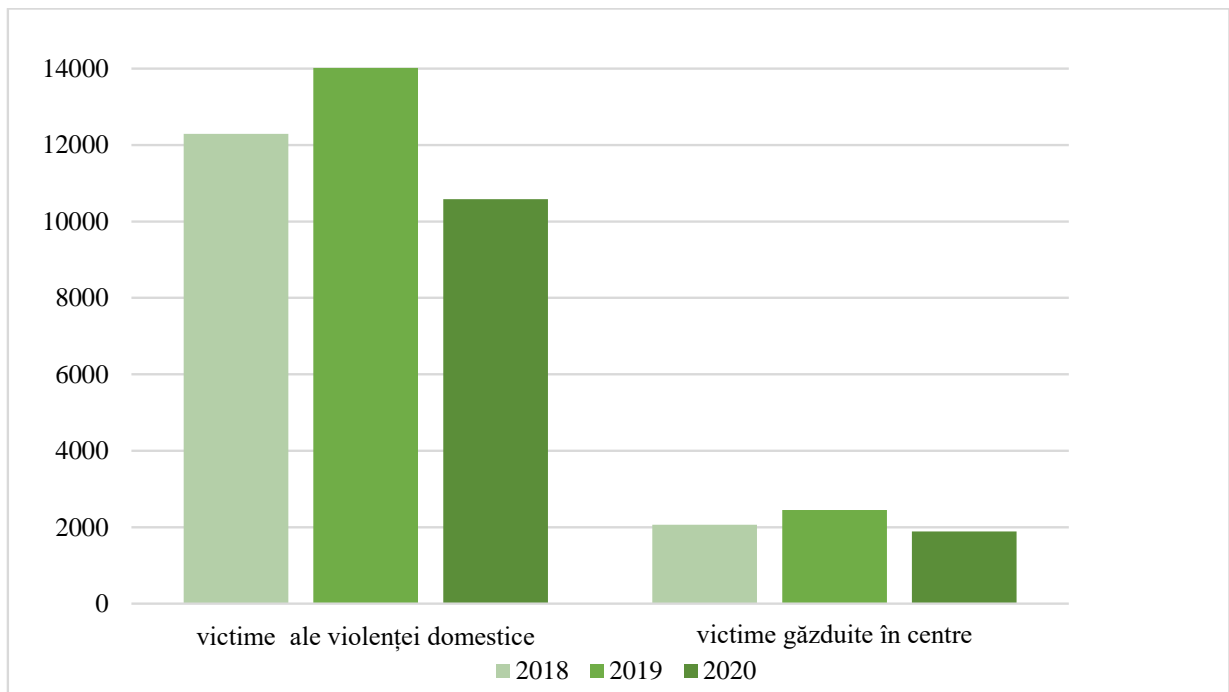
$$CVD = CV * \frac{(CPRU + CRVVF + LP)}{3}$$

Were also identified factors that can affect cost estimation using this method, for example:

- Cost standard is set per year, but a victim can benefit from this service for a period of several days, weeks or months and not necessarily a full year.
- Cost standard is a minimum, indicative amount, because each County Council can supplement the funds allocated to these services, to ensure services of a higher quality.
- Standard cost does not include all direct and indirect costs.
- The analysis of the evolution of the costs generated by domestic violence was of longitudinal type, i.e., were compared the data from the years 2018, 2019, 2020, while the benchmark for the period of the Covid 19 pandemic was the year 2020.

### MAIN RESULTS

In 2020, the year of the Covid 19 pandemic, there were 24% fewer cases of domestic violence than in 2019 (Fig.3). These figures also don't mean that there were fewer cases of violence in the year of the pandemic, but rather that there were fewer cases reported. Unfortunately, the measures to limit the spread of the Covid 19 pandemic, ordered by the authorities since March 2020, have made it difficult for the victims, who in order to protect themselves, would have wanted to leave their homes, this most often being the place where most violence types are exercised. Also, travel ban measures made it even more difficult to access the support services dedicated to them, which, as I mentioned earlier, are often condensed in large urban areas.



**Figure 3. The dynamics of cases of victims of domestic violence and the use of accommodation services**

*Data Source: National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*

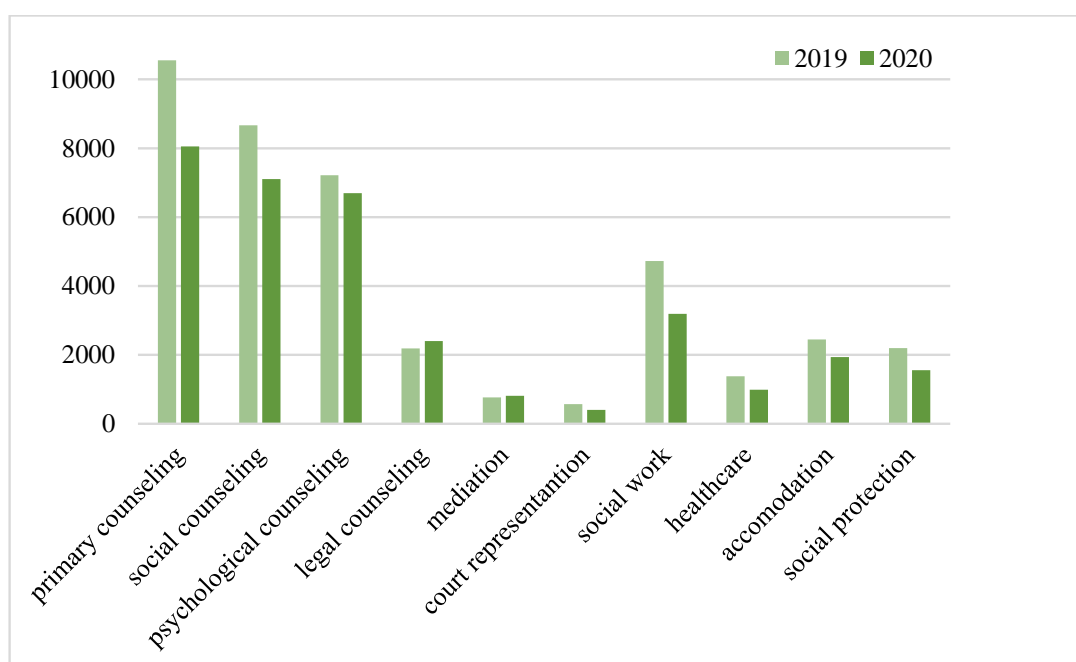
A similar situation is registered regarding the number of victims of domestic violence who chose to benefit from hosting services in 2020, the percentage being 22% lower than in 2019. Measures imposed by the authorities to limit the spread of the Covid pandemic 19 had effects not only on the reporting of domestic violence cases (and thus the figures are below the real ones), but

also on the decisions to use the services offered in these situations. Implicitly, the costs generated by hosting victims of domestic violence in 2020 are 22% lower than in 2019.

Using the above calculation formula, we may be able to determine the costs of hosting services for victims of domestic violence.

Considering the last 5 years, the highest costs were in 2018, subsequently decreasing in 2019 and 2020. The decrease recorded in 2019 was not caused by the pandemic, since there were no cases of COVID-19 infections in Romania in that period. In 2018, on July 13, 2018, the Romanian Parliament adopted Law No. 174/2018 amending and supplementing Law No. 217/2003 to prevent and combat domestic violence, published in the Official Gazette No. 618 of July 18, 2018. „New regulation creates a victim-centered approach and the development of measures to prevent acts of domestic violence (psychological counseling in cases of divorce with a history of domestic violence, monitoring of protection orders/measures to prevent their violation) and also, provides for emergency intervention measures in situations of immediate risk”(<https://anes.gov.ro/legislatie-nationala-violenta-domestica/>).

Some of the services received by victims of domestic violence have the costs covered by the center in which they are beneficiaries, for example accommodation, primary, social, legal, psychological counseling and even representation in court or obtaining medical documents attesting to the aggression (fig.4). To benefit from these facilities free of charge, victims of domestic violence must be the beneficiaries of support centers, as the amounts are covered by the licensed social service provider.



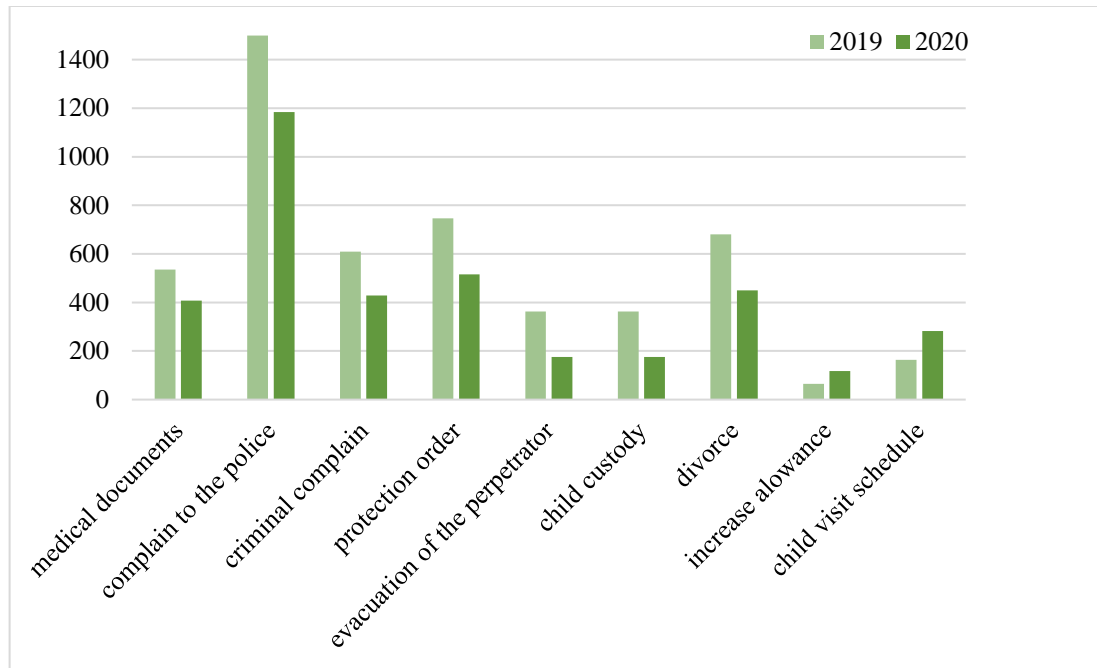
**Figure 4. Services provided to victims of domestic violence in 2019 and 2020**  
Data Source: National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

From the analysis of the data and as shown in Figure 3, I found a growing trend of victims of domestic violence to seek legal advice. These figures may be based on the decisions of the authorities to limit the spread of the Covid 19 pandemic, through lockdown measures, periods of time in which the victims were forced to stay with the aggressor in the same house, a fact which led to a strong emotional imbalance because "By interacting with others, we perceive a reflected image from which we appropriate some of the perceptions of others" (Fitzek, 2020).

The statistical situation shows that in 2019, 24% more actions were taken to address judicial authorities, compared to 2020 (Fig. 5). The trend is decreasing in most cases (for obtaining medical documents, reporting to the police, criminal complaints, protection orders, evacuation requests,



obtaining custody, divorce applications), except for procedures related to the maintenance pension and the visiting schedule of the child. The Covid 19 pandemic caused an economic contraction, influenced primarily by the restriction or even closure of some economic activities, which generated the need to access money from various sources to cover financial needs, including actions to change the amount of the maintenance pension (increase or decrease). An explanation for the increase in actions regarding the modification of the child visitation schedule may also be since among the few exceptions to restrictions on the free movement of persons was "travel for justified reasons, such as child care/accompaniment", according to the provisions of art. 1 of the Military Ordinance no. 3 from 24.03.2020.



**Figure 5. The legal proceedings situation in 2019 and 2020**

*Data Source: National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*

Legal action can be taken both on behalf of the victims of domestic violence and by the authorities on their behalf. In this context, there are costs that do not involve costs (filing a criminal complaint), but also others that have costs due to the need to hire a lawyer (for example to obtain a protection order, evacuation of the aggressor, child custody, divorce, parental leave, child visitation schedule).

## CONCLUSION

Regarding the methodological difficulties of the investigation, I found that in Romania the data collected by the authorities may be distorted by situations such as double registration of cases, the reality of those declared by the victim/witnesses, different reporting methodologies, etc. It is also well known that domestic violence is rarely reported to the authorities, with the victim choosing not to disclose it. A disadvantage 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.

This approach to quantifying the costs of domestic violence is a challenge for any researcher, especially as each state has a different social and legislative context. However, efforts must be continued and supported primarily at the governmental level, especially after the adoption of legislative measures that have a major impact on society. Such an approach may reflect whether the measures taken are optimal or need to be adjusted according to the results of scientific studies. At

European level, efforts are being made to think of unitary methodologies for assessing the phenomenon of domestic violence, so that the figures can be easier to compare, but most importantly, to make trends easier to predict.

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