

The Equality Council has released a decision in the case of M.P. vs Pavel Paduraru and the publication “Timpul de dimineață”

Discrimination and gender stereotypes remain some of the biggest problems confronting women in the Republic of Moldova. The effects of discrimination against women are many, from unequal salaries and underrepresentation in politics and management to serious forms of abuse and domestic violence.

One sensitive problem is attitudes towards women who are victims of sexual offenses, and, in particular, victims of rape. These attitudes are, in many cases, based on serious prejudices that can affect both how a crime itself is investigated and, at the same time, create a hostile environment for victims, demeaning and stigmatizing them.

Recently, the Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality published [a decision released on 10 February 2017](#), in which it found that the use by a journalist of stereotypes and prejudices when discussing women in articles relating to rape cases and the private lives of victims constitutes discrimination on the basis of gender.

In particular, the Council found that: “ (...) the journalist, by publishing the article concerned, understood that the information on the victim would cause a negative reaction, but this knowledge did not persuade him to stop emphasizing this aspect. Moreover, the way in which he presented the second article, especially his use of the expression “the victim herself probably dragged the rapist to bed” confirmed the

presence of a prejudice, which undoubtedly affected the attitude of the public toward this subject. Therefore, the Council found that he acted in bad faith, because the journalist did not publish a value judgment or idea, but publicly conveyed in the media a stereotype about women and the idea that a woman's behavior and personality could be responsible for her so-called rape".

According to the victim's lawyer, Dumitru Sliusarenco: "This decision is a necessary one, because there are many prejudices in society about women who are victims of rape. Its importance mainly derives from the fact that it sets limits on the freedom of expression in public forums, because of the sensibility of the crime of rape and aspects related to that. At the same time, in its Decision the Council emphasized the necessity of respecting and protecting the private lives of participants in trials, especially of victims, an important position and one without precedent in the Republic of Moldova".

Previously, the Promo-LEX Association has brought the lack of effective, uniform practices for investigating sexual offenses involving minors to the attention of the authorities. Details are [here](#). This rape case, litigated by Promo-LEX, resonated in the mass media, which called it "the rape in Orhei." There was much discussion in the media about this case, including those articles published by "Timpul de dimineață" that were recently been found to be discriminatory by the Press Council and the Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality.

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