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Romanian Legislation on Femicide

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New Perspectives on Combating Violence Against Women: An Overview of the Italian and Romanian Legislation on Femicide

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Abstract

The recognition of femicide as a criminal offense is a recent development in the European Union. According to a study published by Global Human Rights Defense in March 2022, none of the European Union member states' criminal codes contained provisions specifically addressing femicide. Nowadays, numerous EU member states' legal system include the legal concept of femicide, and we can even observe the criminalisation of femicide in our close vicinity (e.g., Romania, Croatia). As a result of the harmonization of EU legislation and the new amendments to the criminal codes of several Member States, there is a possibility for femicide to be incorporated into Hungarian criminal legislation, hence it is particularly important to monitor such legislative trends in neighboring countries.

The study aims to present possible directions for EU-level legislation, as well as the latest developments in national criminal law regarding femicide, specifically the new Romanian and Italian 'femicide laws'. To illustrate the expected legislative trends at an EU-level, I present the key provisions of the VAW Directive and the Gender Equality Strategy for 2026 – 2030. Additionally, I review the Italian and Romanian 'femicide laws' which have recently entered into force. Both laws aim to prevent lethal violence against women through comprehensive, multidisciplinary measures. The amendments of the Romanian Criminal Code are reminiscent of Hungarian legal thinking; thus, a more in-depth examination of the new aggravated cases in Romania could provide valuable insights for Hungarian lawmakers. Furthermore, the legislative packages presented contain useful provisions regarding data collection, prevention, and victim protection, making it worthwhile to incorporate them into Hungarian legislation.

Link words: femicide, homicide, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, criminal law

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Introduction

Femicide is the most heinous form of violence against women; the intentional killing of a woman because of her gender. Although femicide as a legal concept has a long history across the ocean, it took a long time to be recognized in European countries. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the alarming rise in domestic violence, femicide as a separate offense started to appear in the criminal codes of Europe. The criminalisation of femicide quickly gained momentum, and soon the new offense was introduced to the penal code of several EU countries.² The study focuses on the current aspects of the elimination of violence against women, mainly the ‘femicide laws’ in Italy and Romania.

Reframing Gender-Based Violence: Emerging EU Regulatory Responses to Femicide and VAW

As a result of the changes that have taken place over the past five years, achieving gender equality and eliminating gender-based violence has become an actively evolving area of EU legislation. In this regard, Directive 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence (hereinafter: the VAW Directive) has become an inevitable legal instrument.

One of the key objectives of the VAW Directive is for all Member States to incorporate the criminal offenses listed in the directive (female genital mutilation; forced marriage; non-consensual sharing of intimate or manipulated material; cyber stalking; cyber harassment; cyber incitement to violence or hatred).³ Furthermore, the directive defines, in connection with the aforementioned offenses, the scope of aggravating circumstances that Member States must integrate into their national criminal codes.⁴

Although the VAW Directive does not cover femicide, which is the primary focus of this research, it nevertheless provides important regulatory provisions. On the one hand, the directive defines several terms closely related to femicide (in particular: violence against women, intimate partner violence) and on the other hand, it ensures the criminalization of acts that can often be viewed as ‘precursors’ to femicide (for example: online harassment, revenge

² *Author’s note:* currently Malta, Cyprus, Croatia, Italy and Romania established femicide as a separate offense or as an aggravated form of homicide. The Belgian legislation does not criminalise femicide, however it does provide a legal definition of the different types of femicide for data collection purposes.

³ Introductory Provisions, section (9) of the VAW Directive

⁴ *Author’s note:* The text of the VAW Directive includes aggravating factor (in Hungarian: súlyosító körülmény), but in Hungarian material criminal law, this is actually classified as an aggravated case (in Hungarian: minősített eset) or would be classified as such in the future.

porn).⁵ Furthermore, I consider it highly likely that in the near future, the European Union will require Member States to transpose similar, mandatory provisions into national law regarding femicide.

In light of this, it is necessary to highlight the EU's expected approach to tackling gender-based violence. The Gender Equality Strategy for 2026–2030 is a multidisciplinary document containing concrete measures and recommendations, which builds heavily on the CEDAW Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action. The strategy has set eight main goals for the upcoming years: the elimination of gender-based violence; the full guarantee of the right to physical and mental health; the enabling of financial and economic equality and independence; the balance of career and private life; equal conditions in the workplace; high-quality and inclusive education; active, equal, and safe participation in politics and public life; and the establishment of institutional-level measures that promote gender equality.⁶

In the context of eliminating gender-based violence, the focus is on sexual violence and sexual exploitation committed in the online realm. Regarding sexual violence, the strategy assigns the task of monitoring current Member State legislation and subsequently adopting a unified EU-wide definition of sexual violence.⁷ The primary goal of this is to establish a consent-based definition of rape in alignment with the VAW Directive, meaning that without consent, all sexual acts would be considered rape in all Member States.⁸

The strategy also places special emphasis on combating gender-based acts of violence committed in the online space (e.g., the distribution of revenge porn, sexually explicit content generated with the usage of artificial intelligence). The key measures in this regard are close cooperation with online platforms and providing guidelines for so-called ‘trusted flaggers’.⁹

The strategy does not include mechanisms specifically aimed at reducing the number of femicides, but it does mention femicide as the most tragic form of violence against women. Concerning the elimination of physical abuse against women, the Commission commits to

⁵ 3- 8 Article, Chapter 2 of the VAW Directive

⁶ European Commission: *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030*. Brussels, 2026. 1. p.

⁷ Ibid. 3. p.

⁸ Ibid. 3. p.

⁹ Ibid. 3 – 4. pp.

supporting the work of Member State investigative authorities and prosecutors through guidelines, and also intends to enhance cross-border cooperation in this area as well.¹⁰

Such recent legal and political documents indicate that a more harmonious, EU-wide criminal legislation is expected in the area of combating violence against women.

From family matters to women’s rights protection: a path forward the Italian ‘femicide law’

In Italy, a paradigm shift regarding the criminal approach of violence against women has been observable since the early 1990s, with the entry into force of Law No. 66 of 1996 on provisions against sexual violence. The legislative intent behind the aforementioned law reflects societal changes in the perception of gender-based violence, as the legislation no longer classifies sexual violence as a crime against public morality, but rather as an act against an individual’s sexual freedom.¹¹ Prior to this, Italian society viewed violence against women quite differently, and the legal implications of this were evident in the Criminal Code until as late as 1981. Article 587 of the Italian Penal Code regulated honor killings in a manner comparable to voluntary manslaughter Hungarian Criminal Code, meaning that a perpetrator who committed homicide to protect family honor received a lighter sentence.¹² Similarly to the modern concept of femicide, the earlier Italian approach has been replaced by a new viewpoint, which imposes harsher penalties on perpetrators of honor killings compared to ‘standard’ homicide.

The next significant milestone in criminal law efforts to combat violence against women was Act No. 119 of 2013, the so-called “femicide law,” which in fact did not provide an actual legal definition of femicide, however introduced a number of provisions aimed at preventing femicides and providing more effective protection for victims of domestic violence. The legal discourse prior to the law’s entry into force focused heavily on the criminalization of femicide, given that according to the crime statistics in 2012, the number of femicides was exceptionally high, and the Istanbul Convention also drew society’s attention to violence against women. Despite the public’s need for stricter legal measures the introduction of femicide as a legal concept was not implemented at that time due, amongst other concerns, to constitutional

¹⁰ Ibid. 5. p.

¹¹ Federica SPADAZZI et al: Gender-Based Violence and Femicide: *A Comparative Analysis of the Evolution of International and Italian Legislation to Identify Appropriate Clinical and Judicial Management of Victims of Abuse—The “Pink Code” Pathway and Its Medico-Legal Implications*. Forensic Sciences 6, no. 1/ 2026. 5. p. <https://doi.org/10.3390/forensicsci6010026>

¹² Ibid. 5. p.

issues.¹³ Nevertheless, Law No. 119/2013 could be considered a success in terms of combating gender-based violence: new aggravated offenses were introduced in connection to certain crimes against life and physical integrity, as well as crimes against human dignity, existing preventive measures were strengthened and expanded. Among these procedures, it is worth mentioning the “warning” (*ammonimento*), which can be initiated by the *questore*¹⁴ or the victim and includes measures such as a restraining order, the installation of an electronic monitoring device, or the prohibition of the perpetrator from driving.¹⁵ In addition, with the prosecutor’s permission, the police may take measures to remove the perpetrator from the shared home.¹⁶ Closely linked to the legal definition of femicide, a new aggravated homicide entered into force, which allowed the imposing of life imprisonment if the victim’s death results from harassment.¹⁷ Although this aggravated form of homicide did not explicitly name femicide as it is, based on crime statistics, it can be stated that the introduction of this provision was to deter femicides.

Subsequently, the Senate of the Italian Republic established a special parliamentary committee to work towards a more effective response to femicide, and at the same time a law aimed at supporting orphans of femicide came into effect.¹⁸

The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the legislative processes that ultimately led to the creation of femicide as a legal term. Italian national crime statistics showed a high degree of similarity to the statistical data at the EU level; a sharp increase in the number of domestic violence cases was observed as a result of the pandemic, with women being the primary victims. A drastic increase was observed in homicide-suicides (also known as: extended suicide) committed by men against their partners; a 90.3% increase in this type of homicide was recorded at the beginning of the pandemic.¹⁹ These alarming numbers prompted lawmakers to take more active measures, resulting in the amendment of the Criminal Procedure Act in 2021,

¹³ Consuelo CORRADI et al.: *Exploring the data on femicide across Europe*. In: Shalva WEIL – Consuelo CORRADI – Marceline NAUDI: *Femicide across Europe – Theory, research and prevention*. 122-123. pp.

¹⁴ *Author's note*: The *questore* is the provincial-level head of police, responsible for public order and public safety, as well as related administrative services

¹⁵ Information related to best practices, and other relevant information related to investigation and prosecution of gender-related killing of women and girls in accordance with the resolution of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice entitled "Taking action against gender-related killings of women and girls" – Italy. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012. https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/IEGM_GRK_BKK/Italy_reply_for_publication.pdf 13. p.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 2. p.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 8. p.

¹⁸ CORRADI et al.: 124. p.

¹⁹ SPADAZZI et al.: 6. p.

the entry into force of the act on the collection of statistical data on gender-based violence and the comprehensive prevention and victim assistance act.²⁰

The *Cecchettin case* can be viewed as the direct cause of this crime. The victim in the case that sparked public outrage was Giulia Giulia Cecchettin, a 22-year-old bioengineering student at the University of Padua. Cecchettin was killed with more than seventy stab wounds by her former partner, Filippo Turetta, who was also a university student. The court hearing the case sentenced the perpetrator to life imprisonment.²¹

As a result of the social and legislative processes described above, on 23 July 2025, the Senate, followed by the Chamber of Deputies on 25 November 2025, passed the bill introducing the crime of femicide. Act No. 181/2025 entered into force on 17 December 2025, and addresses the critical issue of femicide by amending several laws.²²

Article 1 of the law amends the Italian Criminal Code, providing that a new criminal offense, femicide (*femminicidio*) shall enter into force under Article 577-bis. The new criminal offence added to the Penal Code defines femicide as follows:

‘Anyone who causes the death of a woman when the act is committed as an act of discrimination or hatred toward the victim in her capacity as a woman, or to suppress the exercise of her rights or freedoms, or, in any case, the expression of her personality, shall be punished by life imprisonment.’²³

The Italian definition – unlike the concepts of femicide applied in other countries – omits many aspects of domestic violence (such as: causing the death of a female child, fatal abuse of a partner not in connection with separation etc.). The underlying reason for this is that other aggravated offenses already effectively covered the narrowly defined scope of femicide (typically homicides committed by an intimate partner or other relative), therefore the legislator only needed to criminalize the hate crime aspect of femicide.

²⁰ Ibid. 6. p.

²¹ Erlisa DEMNERI: *Femicide: Italy’s 2023 Word of the Year and the Fight Against Femicide in Europe*. Harvard International Review. 4, September, 2025. <https://hir.harvard.edu/femicide-italys-2023-word-of-the-year-and-the-fight-against-femicide-in-europe/>

²² Giulia GUATIERI: *The Italian Parliament approves law introducing the crime of “femicide” (Law No. 181 of 2 December 2025)*. 9 January 2026. Italian Yearbook of Human Rights, Antonio Papisca Human Rights Center. 2. p. <https://unipd-centrodirittiumani.it/en/topics/the-italian-parliament-approves-law-introducing-the-crime-of-femicide-law-no-181-of-2-december-2025>

²³ Article 1 Section 1 a) of Act. no. 181/2025: « Art. 577-bis. - (Femminicidio) - Chiunque cagiona la morte di una donna quando il fatto è commesso come atto di discriminazione o di odio verso la persona offesa in quanto donna o per reprimere l'esercizio dei suoi diritti o delle sue libertà o, comunque, l'espressione della sua personalità è punito con l'ergastolo. Fuori dei casi di cui al primo periodo, si applica l'articolo 575.

The subsequent articles deal with legislative amendments that fall outside the scope of material criminal law, among which I would highlight the measures pertaining to criminal procedure and correctional law.

Article 2 stipulates that the Minister of Justice must submit an annual report to Parliament on the application of these provisions, as well as on data regarding proceedings related to femicides.²⁴ Article 3 amends several provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, with the aim of strengthening the legal protection of victims in criminal proceedings related to violence against women and domestic violence. In this regard, it expands victims' rights to information and participation, extends the scope of restraining orders, and establishes new rules of procedure aimed at preventing secondary victimization.²⁵ Among the other articles, one deserves special mention in the area of penal enforcement: the exclusion or restriction of access by individuals convicted of femicide to certain benefits during the execution of their sentence.²⁶

Dual approach: a legislative milestone in combating violence against women in Romania

Lastly, I will review the Romanian legislation on femicide, which entered into force on 26 April 2026, as well as the social, political, and legal processes that led to the adoption of this criminal offense. Given the timely nature of the topic, it is of course impossible to take a position on the success of the new offense, thus, the primary aim of this chapter is to reflect on the past and to examine the legislative processes.

Regarding the situation of violence against women in Romania, we are facing a problem that affects society as a whole. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality's 2021 figures, 42% of Romanian women have been victims of abuse, which is ten percentage points higher than the European average.²⁷ If we examine only the fatal forms of violence against women, it can be said that in nearly two-thirds of domestic homicides, the victim was a woman.²⁸ However, crime statistics are by no means reliable; during data collection, gender-based offenses are not recorded, and oftentimes surveys do not include data on the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. Problems such as these are common throughout Europe due to differing definitions of femicide and data collection methods based on various

²⁴ GUATIERI: 4. p.

²⁵ Ibid. 4. p.

²⁶ Ibid. 5. p.

²⁷ Andra-Roxana TRANDAFIR: *Naming to fight it. Femicid, feminicid, legicid în România anului 2025*. Forum Juridic nr. 2 / 2025. 233. p. DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.31178/AUBD-FJ.2025.2.13>

²⁸ Ibid. 233. p.

approaches, hence these statistical shortcomings make it difficult to rank EU countries in terms of the severity of femicide.²⁹

Similar to Italy, legislative processes in Romania accelerated significantly following a high-profile legal case that sparked widespread public outrage, cited by the European Court of Human Rights (furthermore referred to as: ECtHR) as *Bălșan v. Romania*. Although nine years have passed between the establishment of the new femicide offense and the case, Angelica Camelia Bălșan's story was a catalyst for legal efforts aimed at eliminating violence against women. The victim in the case suffered physical abuse from her husband on multiple occasions, and as a result of these assaults, she was hospitalized eight times with serious injuries.³⁰ Despite the fact that the domestic violence was repeatedly documented in medical records, and the victim regularly filed reports and complaints to the police regarding the abuse committed against her, the authorities still remained inactive. According to the investigating authorities, the victim actively contributed to the escalation of the violence, 'provoked' the attacks, and the severity of the injuries did not reach the degree required to classify the acts as criminal offence.³¹ Fed up with the state's lack of action, Bălșan turned to the Strasbourg Court, which found that Romania had violated the provisions of Articles 3 and 14 (prohibition of torture and prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention on Human Rights.³²

Following the ruling of the Court on 23 May 2017, a slow national legislative process began, largely driven by civil society organizations. The inclusion of the obligations set out by the ECtHR into domestic law began with the 2018 'first action plan', which, however, did not result in any measurable improvement.³³ Between 2017 and 2025, thanks to the efforts of organizations working to protect women's rights, the *Bălșan v. Romania* case remained in the spotlight, as these civil society entities maintained regular contact with the Ministerial Committee responsible for ensuring compliance with ECtHR judgments.³⁴

On October 29, 2025, the Romanian Senate scheduled a debate on the proposal on the prevention of femicide and the violence leading up to it. According to the proposal, the primary goal of the act is to recognize femicide as a distinct phenomenon with specific characteristics.

²⁹ Ibid 233. p.

³⁰ *Bălșan v. Romania*. Application no. 49645/09. 23 May 2017, Strasbourg. para. 7 – 14.

³¹ Ibid. para. 29.

³² Ibid. para. 71. and para. 89.

³³ From Strasbourg to Bucharest: How civil society turned a legal victory into Romania's femicide law. European Implementation Network. 7 May 2026. <https://www.einnetwork.org/blog-five/from-strasbourg-to-bucharest-how-civil-society-turned-a-legal-victory-into-romania-s-femicide-law>

³⁴ Ibid.

The law aims to reduce the number of murders of women, coordinate the work of law enforcement entities, and promote education on gender equality. The methods for achieving these goals include, among other things, a legal definition of femicide itself, as well as mandatory data collection requirements for investigative authorities and the judiciary.³⁵ The Legislative Council issued a favourable opinion on the act on November 10, 2025.

The so-called ‘femicide law’ was passed in two stages: first, the Senate approved the act on February 2, 2026, and then, on March 25, 2026, the Chamber of Deputies did the same.³⁶ Nicușor Dan, President of Romania, signed the ordinance promulgating the law on April 23, 2026, and commented on the act as follows: *‘For too long, the legislature has either ignored violence against women or failed to give it the attention it deserves, (...) and so, in recognition of this painful reality, it is our duty to correct our mistakes. A law that imposes strict penalties and introduces measures to help prevent femicides and domestic violence is of the utmost importance.’*³⁷ The Romanian president’s remarks also reflect the law’s dual objectives: on the one hand, its undisguised intent to serve as a deterrent, and on the other, its aim to establish legal tools for more effective prevention.

Law No. 53/2026, which entered into force on April 26, 2026, defines the concept of femicide and, similar to Belgian legislation, distinguishes between different types of femicide. The categories established in relation to femicides primarily facilitate more effective data collection, and more detailed crime statistics that comply with international standards. The text of the law itself states that the purpose of this classification is ‘to identify appropriate measures for prevention and eradication, as well as to enable the integration and comparison of data collected at the national level with European and global data collected according to the same criteria.’³⁸ Section 1 of the Act defines the legal concept of femicide as follows:

³⁵ Raport comun asupra Proiectului de Lege pentru prevenirea și combaterea femicidului și a violențelor care îl preced. Comisia specială comună a Camerei Deputaților și Senatului în domeniul legislației privind prevenirea, combaterea și sancționarea violenței domestice – “România fără violență domestică” - Comisia juridică, de disciplină și imunități. București, 24 March 2026.

³⁶ Legea nr. 53/2026 privind femicidul. JURIDICE.ro. 24 April 2026. <https://www.juridice.ro/804794/legea-nr-53-2026-privind-femicidul.html>

³⁷ Nicușor Dan: Legea pentru prevenirea și combaterea femicidului, promulgată. Agentia Nationala De Presa, AGERPRES. 23 April 2026. <https://agerpres.ro/2026/04/23/nicusor-dan-legea-pentru-prevenirea-si-combaterea-femicidului-promulgata--1549375>

³⁸ Article 1 Section (2) of Legea nr. 53/2026.

‘For the purposes of this Act, ‘femicide’ means the intentional killing of a woman or any act of violence that results in a woman’s death, regardless of whether the act is committed by a family member or a third party.’³⁹

The text of the law distinguishes between intimate and non-intimate femicide, with these definitions drawing heavily on the concepts of femicide established by international organisations. In criminological terms, “classic” femicide is the killing of an intimate partner. In the vast majority of femicide cases, the perpetrator is a current or former spouse or partner, while homicides committed by a parent against a child rank second. The Romanian femicide law defines intimate partner femicide as follows:

‘Intimate partner femicide is the intentional killing of a woman or girl by a family member, including—but not limited to—murders motivated by the perpetrator’s desire to exercise control and power over the victim, or where the aim is to hinder or suppress the victim’s fundamental rights, as well as those committed in the name of culture, customs, religion, tradition, or so-called ‘honor,’ or for any other reason.’⁴⁰

In contrast, non-intimate femicide is a much broader category that includes homicides motivated by misogyny, murders committed in connection with sexual exploitation and human trafficking, homicides committed in connection with sexual offenses, as well as those femicides where a power-based, hierarchical relationship existed between the perpetrator and the victim.⁴¹ In the case of non-intimate femicide as well, the legislature leaves the list open-ended, aligning it with the definitions found in international documents.

Lastly, the law introduces the concept of indirect femicide. The definition is difficult to interpret from a criminal law perspective, since in this case of femicide the act in question is not intentional homicide, but rather acts that result in the death of a woman. In this instance, however, the legislature explicitly defines the two scenarios it considers to constitute indirect femicide: death resulting from genital mutilation, and driving a woman to suicide by a partner or relative.⁴²

³⁹ Article 1 Section (3) a) of Legea nr. 53/2026.: fomicidul este uciderea cu intenție a unei femei, precum și moartea unei femei, survenită ca urmare a lovirilor sau vătămărilor cauzatoare de moarte ori a altor infracțiuni intenționate urmate de moartea victimei, indiferent dacă faptele sunt comise de un membru al familiei sau de o altă persoană.

⁴⁰ Article 1 Section (3) b) of Legea nr. 53/2026.

⁴¹ Article 1 Section (3) c) of Legea nr. 53/2026.

⁴² Article 1 Section (3) d) of Legea nr. 53/2026.

Following the definition of the term, the law sets obligations regarding data collection and recording, educational obligations related to gender equality, and, finally, amendments to the Criminal Code.

The Femicide Act amends the Criminal Code regarding aggravated homicide and domestic violence. In the case of homicide we encounter an approach that differs from legislative methods used in other European countries. The Romanian legislator in accordance with the relevant international documents, particularly the Istanbul Convention expands the scope of aggravated homicide, however does not establish a separate criminal offence. Thus far, most legislators have incorporated femicide as a stand-alone crime into their penal code. Romania included the following aggravating circumstances in the Criminal Code: (i) homicide committed as a form of control or domination within a relationship; (ii) homicide motivated by gender-based factors and circumstances⁴³; (iii) committed in the context of ending a relationship.⁴⁴

This approach is much more familiar to the Hungarian legal thinking and the current Hungarian Criminal Code. The penalty for committing femicide is the same as aggravated murder, meaning that the penalty shall be imprisonment between fifteen to twenty-five years, or life imprisonment.

A positive aspect of the proposed legislation is its dual approach to femicide: from the perspective of data collection it establishes broad, inclusive definitions of femicide, which enables a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. However the amendments of the Criminal Code are minimal, the changes focus on the compliance with international standards. I believe this type of femicide legislation serves the threefold goal of understanding, preventing and punishing much better than those reforms where the legislator solely focuses on the amendment of the penal code. Compared to the Belgian femicide law, the Romanian act is stricter, since it also seeks to combat violence against women through criminal punishment.

⁴³ *Author's note*: the cited subparagraph covers a broader range of aggravating circumstance, however regarding the topic of femicide gender-based motivation is the most relevant. (Article 6 Section 2. k) : for reasons related to race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political opinion or affiliation, wealth, social origin, age, disability, illness, or HIV/AIDS, or for other similar circumstances). In the Hungarian Criminal Code this would be considered as homicide with malice aforethought or with malicious motive, which is an aggravated case of homicide.

⁴⁴ Article 6 Section 2. j) – l) of Legea nr. 53/2026.

Closing remarks

Essentially, as a result of the harmonization of EU legislation and the criminal legislation of the Member States, it is possible for femicide to be included in Hungarian criminal law. Drawing from the VAW Directive and the goals of the EU's Gender Strategy we can observe a strong need for unified legal definitions and a legally binding obligation on states to implement different offenses into their national law. Therefore I firmly believe, that after the consent-based definition of rape, femicide will be the new focus of the fight against gender-based violence.

In my opinion, the approach we have seen so far in other EU countries – establishing a separate femicide offense – is foreign to Hungarian criminal thinking. Personally, I think the Romanian method is favourable, and if Hungary decides to include femicide in the Criminal Code it is far more likely to be an aggravating case of homicide.

A multi-step approach of femicide seems to be the most beneficial when it comes to the legislation. In Italy the legislative process was an ongoing discourse for decades, the new act regarding femicide is 'just' one milestone in combating violence against women. On the other hand Romania's new femicide law embraces a more compact, holistic approach, where we could observe obligations regarding data collection, victim protection, and education besides the amendments of the penal code. Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the first measure in combating lethal violence against women is gathering data in accordance with international standards and adopting legal definitions that support this effort. Once all non-criminal law measures have been explored, the legislature can then examine whether it is necessary to include femicide in the criminal code.

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