

## LAW NO. 22/2018 "ON SOCIAL HOUSING"

**The most important act for the effective realization of social housing programs for victims of violence!**

**A further step towards meeting the standards of the Council of Europe Convention "On Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence"**

The Albanian Parliament adopted the Law No.22 / 2018 "On Social Housing", which is the most important act for the fulfilment of social housing programs, constituting its natural purpose.

Welcoming the adoption of this law, the Centre for Civic Legal Initiatives (CLCI) wishes to emphasize its importance for the sanctioning of housing support services for women victims of violence.

Likewise, CLCI expresses its satisfaction that even in this case, the Albanian Parliament has carefully addressed and reflected in the law, suggestions submitted by civil society organizations during the consultation process for the draft law presented to the Assembly. As a result of our cooperation with the Assembly during the consultation process, the law has reflected new international standards that precede the fulfilment of the obligations of the state for the protection and support of the social strata, and in particular victims of violence.

Specifically, from the suggestions that CLCI brought to the attention of the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Affairs, Public Administration and Human Rights, on 07.02.2018, the latter took into account and reflected some of them in the law. First, those that relate to the implementation of the standards set by the Council of Europe Convention "*On Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*". One of the obligations for Member States deriving from this European Convention is to take the necessary measures to ensure that victims have access to services such as housing, which is one of the main support services for them (Article 20 of the Convention).

Referring to the meaning of "Victim of Domestic Violence" as defined in Law no. 104/2012 "On the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention '*On Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*'" (Article 2/46), the law has expanded and strengthened support for the categories of victims provided in this Convention. The law has foreseen three categories of abused women as beneficiaries of this service (see: Article 2, points 46, 47, 48 and Article 43, item 1 / f / g

<https://www.parlament.al/akt/ligj-nr-222018-per-strehimin-social/>):

1. Victims of domestic violence;
2. Victims of trafficking;
3. Potential victims of trafficking;

CLCI considers this fact as a significant achievement of the law, also expressing the belief that in the near future, other categories of victims of violence, not necessarily abused in the family, will be included in the law as beneficiaries of housing services, according to the obligations set by the Convention.

CLCI considers it an improvement of the law content in the gender perspective, since Article 29,

paragraph 4 recognizes that each member of the family declares their own income rather than the head of household doing it, as it was planned in the project.

The implementation of international standards is a priority of CLCI's work in carrying through the project "Establishing a network of non-profit organizations for a better implementation of international standards on gender equality and gender-based violence in Albania" - under the framework of the Regional Programme "Implementing Norms, Changing Minds," implemented by UN Women Albania with the financial support of the European Commission.