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PROJECT n° 101095877

PROJECT TITLE: FATIMA 2: Preventing Honour Related Violence against women  
through Social Impact Projects and Peer Learning led by  
young men

Article 2

## HONOR BASED VIOLENCE

### Analysis of a report with the results of a nationally representative survey among the Bulgarian population

The participants in the study among the population of Bulgaria are 16 years old and older, with an emphasis on different social groups (Bulgarians, Roma, Turks, Armenians, Jews, etc.), in order to establish public attitudes towards forms of violence in the name of honour and its spread among different social strata of the Bulgarian population. The nationally representative survey was conducted in June and July 2020.

Relationships in a family are determined by several key factors - traditions and moral norms, organization of family life and decision making, choice of marriage partner and reaction to crisis (from the point of view of family life) situations.

### Reflection of traditions and moral norms on behaviour

Traditions and morals, which are passed down from generation to generation and their influence on the behaviour of individuals, are of key importance in establishing the role of the more patriarchal-traditional and more liberal-minded in society. By itself, neither can be seen as an entirely positive or entirely negative factor. In the context of the object of interest of the present study, the acceptance of more traditional values is a prerequisite, but not the only and necessarily leading to violence based on honour and in particular to early marriage.

The largest share of people who take a more balanced position and share that in their behaviour they comply with traditions to varying degrees, without them being completely defining, but without rejecting them completely - 67%. Of them, 2/3 comply with them to a greater extent, and for 1/3 personal judgment remains the leading one. The most attached to the edicts of the patriarchy are 25%, for whom traditional values are decisive in their actions. At the other end are the 8% for whom morals handed down through generations do not matter.

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Of interest is the group of those  $\frac{1}{4}$  of our compatriots, for whom traditions completely determine their behaviour.

- Ethnic groups, other than the Bulgarian, fall there, where these understandings are 2.0 to 2.5 times more widespread. The measured values are close to half for the representatives of the following communities – Jewish, Turkish, Armenian and Roma.
- As age increases, the proportion of people for whom traditions have a leading influence on their behaviour increases.
- These are to a greater extent the people with the lowest education and those who adhere to their obligations in the family and community and are not aware of their rights as citizens.

### Organization of family life and decision-making

The coexistence of several generations in one dwelling, especially given the dominant role of traditions among the elders, is a prerequisite for them to impose their views on the younger ones and to sanction in one way or another the deviation from them, as an attack on the honour of the family. In the survey, 41% shared that they live in the same home for several generations.

- This cohabitation is more common among Roma and Turks, as well as among the least educated and those with lower incomes. The stereotypical division of household duties by gender – male and female – is a reality for 47% of respondents.

In the research, the share of people who share those problems in the family (scandals or beatings) should remain in it and the good name of the family should be preserved, is 53%.

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- Gender division of duties and preservation of the good name of the family is characteristic of three ethnic groups - Turks, Roma and Armenians. Again, the least educated and those with lower incomes share this understanding.

The way of making decisions in the family is another indirect indicator, through which the potential risks of imposing norms unacceptable to individuals and, respectively, of sanctioning those who do not adhere to them, can be established. In 15% of families, decisions that affect everyone are made by one person without discussion, "because he knows best what is right".

### Awareness and spread of forms of violence in the name of honour in the close family circle

Between half a percent and 13% of the Bulgarian population admit that their family or other familiar families know about forms of violence in the name of honour. The most common is the most fluid form of violence - limiting contacts with friends, relatives, etc. people to prevent the risk of someone tarnishing the family honour, mentioned by 13% of Bulgarians. 9% of citizens talk about early marriage (before the age of 16), and 8% of the Bulgarian population are familiar with cases of physical violence due to tarnished family honour among relatives. While no statistically significant differences are observed by socio-demographic groups in the case of banning or limiting contacts, the representatives of the Roma ethnic group have direct experience with cases of early marriage to a significantly higher degree (63% compared to 13% of the representatives of the Turkish ethnic group, 6% of Armenians in Bulgaria and 2% of ethnic Bulgarians). 1.4% of persons aged 16 and over (mainly from Roma ethnicity) were victims of a marriage in which actual bride price was required.

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Also 1.4% of people were victims of relatives arranging meetings with a person of the opposite sex, without the person's consent. 6% and 5% of citizens are aware of situations involving control over sexual life by a family member and cases of house arrest. A relatively narrow circle of citizens - about 3% - have information about a forced marriage with a partner chosen by relatives and a forced abortion in the immediate environment.

These results also confirm the observations from the in-depth interviews with experts - that the most "problematic" form of violence in the name of honour for Bulgaria are early forced marriages. Conversely, extremely violent forms of violence typical of some closed communities in Middle Eastern countries such as attempted murder, acid pouring or female circumcision are rather an exception for the country. If we gather the shares of persons who were in direct contact with early marriage, physical violence due to disgraced family honour, or restriction of social contacts and those who believe that in Bulgaria such forms of cruelty are a problem in certain social groups, the share of the citizens who consider that these manifestations of violence in the name of honour are widespread in the country are between 76% and 89%.

Forms of honour-based violence that are more intimate, such as forced abortion, female genital mutilation, and control of an individual's sex life by the family remain more hidden. That is why the highest share of citizens (about a quarter) abstain from an opinion on whether these manifestations are widespread in Bulgaria.

## MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of the conducted nationally representative quantitative survey among the Bulgarian population on the subject of violence in the name of honour are the following:

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- THE REFLECTION OF TRADITIONS AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY MORAL NORMS ON BEHAVIOR is much more prevalent among ethnic groups other than the Bulgarian one - Turks, Roma, Armenians and Jews. With increasing age and among the least educated, we register a higher proportion of people for whom traditions determine their behaviour.
- ORGANIZATION OF FAMILY LIFE AND DECISION-MAKING - the coexistence of several generations in one dwelling, the division of household duties by gender and the preservation of the family's good name at any cost is more common among Roma and Turks, as well as among persons with disabilities, low income and education. Only in single-person decision-making in the family do we see a greater focus on Roma (compared to other ethnicities) and again on people with the lowest education and income. The most vulnerable in terms of the organization of family life and decision-making are those who adhere to family and community obligations and are not aware of their rights as citizens.
- Between half a percent and 13% of the Bulgarian population admit that their family or other familiar families know about forms of violence in the name of honour.
- The study found that a combination of risk factors contributes to the emergence of forms of violence in the name of honour. These are the received low education, the marginality of the social group combined with adherence to an extremely traditional way of life.
- Underage children, representatives of the Roma and Turkish ethnic groups, persons with low education, living in marginalized groups with an extremely traditional way of life are at the highest risk of becoming victims of violence in the name of honour.

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- Since violence in principle (and in particular violence in the name of communal motives) is not tolerated, the majority of Bulgarian citizens (93%) consider acts of violence in the name of honour as unacceptable forms of cruelty that cannot be justified by no arguments.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Проект АСF/13 „Противодействие на злоупотребите в името на честта в социален и правен аспект“  
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