INTRODUCTION

Violence against women as an expression of historically uneven distribution of power between men and women and gender inequality is present in all the stages of development of a society. Women and girls worldwide, regardless of the nation, race, religion, culture, age and status, are subject to various forms of physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse. The roots of violence against women lie deep in the structure of the society and represent the most frequent form of human rights violation in Europe. According to the data of the World Health Organization, various studies show that in average 10 to 50% of women have experienced some sort of physical violence by their partners, 12 to 25% of women were subject to an attempt or coerced sexual intercourse, also by their former or current partners, the distribution of coerced prostitution and trafficking in women rises every year. An unbelievable number of as much as four million human trafficking victims annually is alarming data on the extent of the exploitation of women and children which points to the very necessary struggle to stop trafficking.

In international documents the consideration of violence was not commenced until the 1990-s. One of the most important documents for women’s human rights is the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted in 1979. It does not contain any regulations on violence against women. The Convention only defines the discrimination of women as: ...any distinction, exclusion or the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. The Convention has by now been adopted by 170 states, which confirm the presence of the discrimination against women, but also the commitment to eliminate it. The Convention establishes standards for identification and evaluation of the discrimination against women worldwide, which are discriminated in different ways and to a different extent. Violence was not recognized as a pressing issue before 1993 when the Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women was adopted, and when violence was classified as a priority field of action in promoting the equality of men and women.

The real proportions of violence against women are very hard to discern. Most acts of violence take place “between four walls” and in most cases, due to shame, fear, feeling of guilt and lack of information about adequate aid services, remains secret and unreported. The exact data on violence against women are necessary to support and intensify the efforts, mostly by women non-governmental organizations, to establish social and legal mechanisms for surpressing all forms of violence against women.

This research is our humble contribution to the attempt to eradicate violence against women from the everyday practices of this society.

THE DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM
The UN Declaration of the elimination of violence against women defines violence as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Violence against women comprehends, but should not be limited to physical, sexual and psychological domestic violence (battering, sexual violence in the family, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence), violence in the community (rape, sexual abuse and/or harassment at the workplace, educational institutions or elsewhere, trafficking in women, and forced prostitution) and violence perpetrated or condoned by the state.

Violence is manifested in several basic ways, as physical, sexual, psychological, economic, structural and spiritual violence. The largest amount of violence is a combination of physical, sexual and psychological violence with the background of structural violence.

Physical violence includes: pushing, hair pulling, kicking and hitting, burning, biting, strangling, genital mutilation, torture, murder...

Sexual violence is any sexual act committed against the will of the other person, whether the victim does not give the consent or the perpetrator cannot get it because the victim is a child or a mentally challenged person. This sort of violence includes: sexual teasing, unwanted comments, exhibitionism, unwanted sexual proposals, coercion to participate or watch pornography, unwanted touches, coerced sexual intercourse, rape, incest, painful or humiliating sexual act, coerced pregnancy, trafficking in women and exploiting women in sex industry, procurement, sexual intercourse with a child, sexual intercourse by abusing the position, obscene acts...

Psychological violence consists of various forms of mocking, criticism, threats, isolation, tormenting, public assaults etc.

Economic violence in the first place refers to unequal control over the access to joint resources, denying / controlling the access to money, employment or education. In a wider sense it refers to the destruction of property and theft.

Structural violence includes invisible (but ever-present) obstacles in the realization of basic rights. Those obstacles are reproduced in the very social tissue, i.e. in the uneven distribution of power, which produces inequality and makes it legitimate

Spiritual violence refers to the destruction or devastation of women’s cultural or religious beliefs by ridicule, punishment and coercion to adopt a certain system of beliefs.

THE METHOD OF RESEARCH

This research has been conducted by the method of content analysis. The basic criteria for the choice of cases were the female sex and an act of violence. Newspaper articles were then analyzed according to the content analysis pattern which consists of 17 dimensions. In this way general data was gathered on the heading under which the article is found, on its visibility and the announcement on the front page, on the kind of graphical supplement and the geographical range, but also the data on the victim and the perpetrator, on the place and the type of violence and on the legal status which the article is reporting. The data is coded and processed in SPSS. The coding of the text was carried out as a manifest code, thus trying to increase the reliability of the data. Only the descriptive analyses were used for the needs of this brochure.
The objective and the hypotheses of the research

This research wants to determine to what extent the media are covering the problem of violence against women and the media space that is dedicated to it; what type of violence they most frequently deal with; the geographical range of violence; who the victims are, who the perpetrators are and what their relationship is. The long-term objective is to open discussions about this underestimated problem, to raise general awareness and to reduce the level of tolerance, especially towards some sorts of violence.

**H1:** Violence against women is most frequently manifested as physical and sexual violence
**H2:** Economic and psychological violence, although present in a great extent, do not represent a significant sort of violence covered by the media
**H3:** Violence mostly takes place in a domestic environment, i.e. in the victim’s home
**H4:** The perpetrators are mostly persons known to the victims and with whom the victims share the same living space
**H5:** Most victims have experienced more than one type of violence, i.e. the act of violence has manifested through various incidents.

The working hypotheses as basic starting points of the research were mainly confirmed.

The problem which should be pointed out is the not reporting, the withholding and the not registering of all sorts of violence against women, which makes it very hard to make a realistic estimate of the frequency and the extent of the violence against women and it can justifiably be supposed that those numbers are large.

**THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH**

The research was conducted during the February 2003. The analysis included 43 daily papers in 9 Eastern European countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Kosova, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro + Voivodina, Slovakia and Ukraine). A total of 563 articles were processed.

The number of articles in each country varies from 13 in Kosova to 123 in Croatia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of articles</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosova</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia and Montenegro</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voivodina</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the problematic of the research the findings that the articles are mostly found in the Crime
Pages (68%) and only 32% under other headings are not surprising.

The following two dimensions present the media space dedicated to violence. The majority of 89% of the analyzed articles were not announced on the front page.
Furthermore, the articles covering violence compared to other articles under the same heading are most frequently, in 39%, one of the less visible and only in 14% the most visible.
More than a half of the analyzed articles does not contain a graphical supplement. Only 38.9% of the articles are accompanied by a photo. The most frequent graphical supplement that appears in 15.1% of cases belongs to category other that in most cases represents something neutral (court, city…). It is followed by photo of perpetrator in 9.6%.
The processed data report on the committed violence in 87% of the cases while only 13% of the articles report on the attempted act of violence.
In accordance with the basic premises of the research, the results of content analysis confirm the fact that although a woman is subject to various forms of violence, it is most frequently manifested as physical and sexual violence. 43.9% of the articles cover physical violence, while sexual violence is represented in 38.2%. Low percentage of economic and especially psychological violence is not surprising. Although unfortunately present in a great extent, such cases are rarely reported and do not find their way to the newspaper articles if they are not "spiced" by a manifestation of physical or sexual violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF VIOLENCE</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the age of the victims is observed, the victims are distributed in all age groups.
If category unknown is excluded data show that the most numerous belong to "under 18" age group.
Unlike the age distribution of victims, most of the perpetrators are aged between 19 and 54.
As shown in chart below, the majority of the perpetrators belong to the category of more perpetrators in 16.5% followed by a category husband, partner in 15.1%. The most studies show that the majority of the perpetrators belong to the category of familiar persons, i.e., persons the victim is acquainted to, persons the victim trusts and with whom the victim often shares the intimate and private environment. More than one third of the perpetrators (35.5%) belong to the category of current or ex-partner or relatives. If the categories of acquaintance and co-workers is added to this percentage, alarming data is obtained that shows that in 51.2% of the cases the perpetrator is a person known to the victim.
Our results also point to shocking data that an act of violence in 39.3% of the places takes place in the victims home. The second place takes a public space, both outdoors and indoors. The frequency of the violence in this place points to the need for prevention of violence in target population and target space, which is relatively easy to mark in any town.
Under the category incidents, shown in chart below, any form of violence the victim has been subject to is registered, and not only the final consequence. The most represented category of incidents here is murder, which appears in 19.9% of the articles, followed by a theft (17.41%), rape (12.97%) and physical assault (11.9%). The graph gives a detailed insight into the range of violence the victims were subjected to.
In the end a short insight into the legal status of violence against women that was covered by the media during February. The majority of analyzed articles (28%) report on the reported cases of violence followed by the investigation (27%) and the indictment (18%).
CONCLUSION

It could be said that the violence against women has an iceberg effect. Only a small portion of brave women speak out, confronts and reports the perpetrator, while the largest amount of violence, especially domestic violence where the woman is subject to various forms of continual abuse, remains unreported.

This research confirms that violence against women is still marginalized problem in both, media and society. Without the official statistics of the violence committed against women, without serious research and the contribution of the media which approach the problem systematically, covering various aspects, and not only stating individual cases in the Crime Pages, violence will remain a neglected and underestimated problem in the society, with unreasonably high level of acceptance and tolerance.