

Social economic and cultural rights mean access to non-discrimination in employment, education, answering basic needs of different people. Gender discrimination in employment (or not equal rights to work) is prohibited in general (by the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and by Constitutions of most of OSCE-region countries). However, some norms in the Labour codes and legal practices contradict this principles. In at least 10 countries - Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and 5 republics of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kirghistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)– exist lists of jobs forbidden for women. Women are banned by law from hundreds of professions, including prestigious and high-paying ones. Our organization – ADC “Memorial” - runs a campaign "All jobs for all women" <https://adcmemorial.org/all-jobs4all-women/>, insisting on the need to abolish these bans as discriminatory. ADC Memorial believes that all women have the right to work in their specializations; their gender, appearance, and “reproductive function” should not impact their opportunity for employment in any direct or indirect way.

Both CEDAW UN and CESCR UN many times pointed out the problem of inequality of women and men in jobs access, UN experts saw direct discrimination in forbidding some jobs to women, while nothing is forbidden for men, it is clearly stated in the decision of CEDAW UN on the individual complaint of Svetlana Medvedeva from Russia http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/63/D/60/2013&Lang=en : The Committee observes that the adoption of a list of 456 occupations and 38 branches of industry contradicts the State party’s obligations under the Convention because it treats men and women differently, it in no way promotes the employment of women and it is based on discriminatory stereotypes.

The reasoning of the states that refuse to abolish discriminating women legislation is their intention to insure the reproductive function of women. This reasoning is discriminating in itself as it imposes reproductive function of women while women have right to decide for themselves, whether they want to be mothers or to choose for interesting for them profession, or to combine both.

ADC “Memorial” is organizing side-even within HDIM 2017, called “Right to work has no gender” among our speakers are a member of Verkhovna Rada (Parliament of Ukraine), fighting the bans for work in her country, and woman rights activist, truck-driver, female professional working in “forbidden jobs” field.

The video presented on this event (and published on the campaign page <https://adcmemorial.org/all-jobs4all-women/>) shows court in Russia on opposing discrimination of female sailor who was refused employment on board of a ship, as it was forbidden for women type of occupation. ADC “Memorial” has been supporting the case since 2012. Just a few days ago we got the court decision recognising discrimination in this case <https://adcmemorial.org/www/13380.html?lang=en>. This recognition of the problem is important step to the change, however what we need most is the right to work for women, where they want. Legislative change has to follow the recognition and not only in Russia, but in all countries that still keep the old soviet discriminatory norm in their laws.