

DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR DISTRIBUTION BY SERBIA
ON OCTOBER 2nd 2009 AT THE ODIHR MEETING IN WARSAW

Directorate for Gender Equality within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is the institution extending the mandate of the previous Sector for Gender Equality.

The new mandate includes international cooperation, reporting on CEDAW convention to the UN Committee and national implementation of gender equality documents, most notably, Gender Equality Law and National Strategy on the Improvement of the Position of Women and Promotion of Gender Equality, as well as inter-sectoral cooperation including coordination of the work of Gender Equality Council, thus implementing the recommendations of the OSCE mandate.

We hope to improve our cooperation with OSCE which has not encouraged gender equality projects in the preceding year.

Activities and goals of the Gender Equality Directorate remain:

- Harmonization of national legislation with ratified international documents and harmonization with EU legislation,
- Increasing participation of women in decision-making processes and achieving equal representation at all levels and in every segment of social life,
- Improvement of economic position of women, improvement of gender equality in health policy and access to services and support for responsible parenting,
- Achieving gender equality in education, balancing educational profiles and narrowing the gender digital gap by introducing ICT to women,
- Prevention, combating and eventual eradication of violence against women, including domestic violence. Prevention and eradication of gender based violence and improvement of the system for protection of victims,
- Removing gender based stereotypes in media as well as overall promotion of gender equality,

- Combating and preventing stereotypes and discrimination of groups under multiply discriminated groups, rural women, Roma women, and women of different sexual orientation, women with disabilities, and others.

The Directorate is dedicated to promotion and implementation of gender perspective in every single ministry and sector within composition of Serbian Government, in the institutions of the local self-government it coordinates and in other social institutions.

In the last year we completed Gender Equality Law and prepared it for governmental procedure, and we hope the Serbian Parliament will pass it in the beginning of 2009. We finished the National Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Women and Promotion Gender Equality which the Serbian Government will adopt by the end of 2008.

National Strategy and Gender Equality Law were presented to the civil society organizations and to the public at the national conference *Gender Equality and Participation of Women in Public Life*, held in June. The conference was very successful because everyone engaged in drafting Gender Equality Law and National Strategy, from government and civil sector, participated in the public debate on those documents.

The Directorate is currently developing a wider campaign in order to lobby for passing of Gender Equality Law. Drafts of both documents were published and circulated and by now they reached a wider audience and managed to raise the awareness about gender equality in Serbia.

In this year Gender Equality Directorate participated in creation of Ministry of Labor and Social Policy contribution to the integral project in process of EU accession – National Program for Integration of Serbia in EU. This document represents the joint plan of activities necessary in the process of accession to EU.

Concerning the fact that Civil Society Organizations represent an important factor in promotion and campaign for improvement of the position of women in Serbian society, Gender Equality Directorate is working on generating and furthering the dialogue with COCS (Contact Organizations of Civil Society). This cooperation has been implemented

through the collaboration with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia Team for Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation.

In order to further improve and assure continuity of cooperation of government and civil society sector, Directorate plans to introduce a new institution – Forum for dialogue with civil society, which would advance the communication and transparency in both directions.

Gender Equality Directorate will also host a Regional Conference on EU Legislation and Gender Equality in December, thus fostering regional cooperation on the vital issue of gender equality.

Striving to introduce issues of gender equality and tolerance, necessary for a full implementation of social inclusion, which is itself a substantial element of social cohesion, is the main principle of work and a major preoccupation of Gender Equality Directorate in Serbia.

Natalija Mićunović, Ph.D.

Director

Gender Equality Directorate

Terazije 41/III

11 000 Belgrade

SERBIA

Tel/fax +381 11 33 45 665

Rodna.ravnopravnost@minrzs.gov.rs

www.minrzs.gov.rs