

Serbia became a state party of the OPCAT in 2006, and after several years of delay Serbia demonstrated the political will to establish NPM.

After a half year of public hearing, in July 2011 the Serbian National assembly adopted the Law that stipulates that the Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) shall carry out the NPM mandate, in collaboration with the Ombudsmen of the autonomous provinces and NGOs.

The reasons for this were numerous.

By the law of the Protector of Citizens he is independent and autonomous body which pays particular attention to advocacy and upgrading the rights of detained persons.

From the foregoing, it follows that the Ombudsman, in addition to reactive functions, has a proactive function.

In this respect he has a mandate such as NPM.

Accordingly, before he was designated as NPM, Ombudsman had established his special monitoring team, which during the period of two years, conducted many visits to the institutions of detention, and drafted number of reports followed by recommendations.

In addition to the above, the Protector of Citizens is organized and acts in accordance with the Paris Principles, and also, was accredited as a National Human Rights Institution, with "A" status.

The reason for stipulating cooperation between the Protector of Citizens and the Ombudsmen of the autonomous provinces and NGOs lies in fact that they hold a wealth of know-how in monitoring places of detention.

After his designation as NPM, the Protector of Citizens did not start visiting the places of detention right away.

First six months of 2011 were spent on organizing and preparing the NPM for work.

Firstly, a memorandum of cooperation with the Provincial Ombudsman was signed.

Then, on the basis of public competition, independent commission appointed nine NGOs to participate with the Ombudsman in carrying out duties of the NPM.

I would like to stress that the NGOs are not part of the Serbian NPM for the sake of transparency. Each NGO is responsible and accountable for systematically keeping track of the treatment of detained persons in a particular field of work.

Now, after half year of preparation Serbian NPM is effective mechanism for prevention of torture.

This year Serbian NPM visited 25 police stations, 6 prisons, 2 psychiatric hospitals, 15 social welfare institutions stationary type and 2 centers for asylum seekers.

Serbian NPM established open continuous and cooperative dialog with Serbian authorities in goal to prevent torture.

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