



Remarks by Ms. Ljiljana Loncar, Assistant to Commissioner for Protection of Equality

Republic of Serbia

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Working session 5: Tolerance and non-discrimination I

Warsaw, 23 September 2015

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about efforts undertaken by Serbia to support national human rights institutions and national mechanisms for the advancement of women and to enhance their capacity to protect and promote women's rights and gender equality.

Regarding steps undertaken for promoting participation of women in all aspects of public life, including political, the most visible measure is introduction of quota for political participation of women which is envisaged in the Law on Election of Members of the Parliament. The Law stipulates that every third person (candidate) on the list must be from the less-represented sex. Otherwise, an electoral list will be rejected. Thanks to these quotas, there was a significant increase in the number of women among Members of Parliament, from 10.8 per cent in 2000, to 34 per cent in 2015.

Despite the achieved number of women in the Parliament, there are still inequalities in parliamentary bodies. There are less women in parliamentary committees dealing with security policies, while they are overrepresented in committees in charge of social policy, education, culture, etc.

It is worth noting, however, that increased number of women MP's resulted in establishment of the Women's Parliamentary Network. This is an informal network, consisting of women MPs, regardless of their political affiliation. The objective of the network is to rise above political stands and conflicts, to join forces and to promote gender equality and women's issues.

Next step would be introduction of quota for participation of women in executive structures, and we expect this to happen in the near future.

With regards to the effective measures that have been taken to prevent and combat gender-based violence, the Commissioner for Protection of Equality participated in drafting the Law on the Police, specifically in the part dealing with the perpetrators of gender-based violence. We are happy to say that our views on the draft Law have been accepted in their entirety and that the new Law is in line with recommendations contained in the Istanbul Convention. Serbia signed and ratified the Istanbul Convention.

There are number of institutions dealing with gender equality which proved to be rather efficient and useful. One of those institutions is the Commissioner for Protection of Equality, an independent, centralized national institution with the main task to prevent and combat discrimination. On the other hand, lack of continuity of some of these bodies, which is due to the frequent political changes, is a problem affecting the level of achievement of gender equality. Practical example for this was abolishing of the Department for gender equality within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Although the Government subsequently established the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, the fact is that newly established body has less competencies.

When it comes to engagement of men in preventing and combating gender-based violence, we are aware that this is a long term process which requires systematic changes. The most efficient way to achieve these changes would be through educational system, which is our long term goal.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the end to invite you to the breakfast meeting tomorrow morning dedicated to the Role of Independent Human Rights Institutions in Combating Violence against Women and Gender-based Discrimination in Serbia, organized by the Office of the Ombudsman, Office of the Commissioner for Protection of Equality, Protector of Citizens – Ombudsman of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the OSCE Mission to Serbia for a very good cooperation we have in promoting gender equality in Serbia.

Thank you.