



Women: Continued Marginalization

Conclusions:

Women continue to be a marginalized group of citizens and, as a result, are in a less favorable social and economic position, which has a negative reflection on all areas and all levels of satisfying their needs. It is necessary to work on raising awareness and informedness, introducing legal regulation, implementation and respect for legal regulations and practice. In 2012, Serbia has ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. The Convention represents an indispensable international-legal document focusing primarily on the protection of human rights of women and other victims of domestic violence. The main goal of the new Convention of the Council of Europe represents establishing zero tolerance in Europe to violence against women and domestic violence.

Recommendations:

- Establish a unified system of monitoring and identification of institutions which deal with this issue (police, social work centers, public prosecutions, health institutions, educational institutions, civil society institutions, courts of general and specific jurisdiction);
- Harmonize legal solutions in order to guarantee rights of victims of domestic violence according to international standards;
- As regards the necessary legal measures, amendment to the Law on Criminal Procedure in terms of expanding the term family member in the criminal offence of domestic violence to the category former spouse, partner or former partner, persons who were or still are in an emotional or sexual relationship, who have a joint or conceived child, even though they have never lived in the same household. Many of the gravest crimes of domestic violence occur in situations when the marriage is over or before it was even formalized.¹
- Ensure equal access of competent bodies to all citizens, in accordance with their needs. Local self-governments need to provide funds for various forms of support to women in their budgets; apart for SOS help-lines, these should include safe houses because they are, unfortunately, ceasing to exist, whereas they haven't been included in the Law on Social Protection as a special institute, which would provide an obligation of establishing and maintaining them; therefore, the existing safe houses need to be integrated into the social protection system and their work needs to be financed from the budget;²

¹ From the Special Report on the Situation of Domestic Violence against Women in Serbia.

² The most efficient way of providing shelter and resocialization to women victims of domestic violence are safe houses. Currently, in the territory of Serbia, there are seven of them, and three more are planned to be built. Experts stress

Persons with Disabilities: Social Inhibition

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Unachieved educational aspirations, low employment, exclusion from institutions of public and political activities, low degree of any sort of activism, cultural abstinence, inaccessible environment, low financial standard – all indicate that persons with disabilities possess all the qualities of a marginalized social group. Continuous social inhibition on various social levels leads to a response in the form of self-isolation and the acceptance of “life with a disability”, but not “life with a disability in a community”; whereas the messages addressed to this group by the social and cultural context most often imply the adoption of a “negative identity”.

In order to increase the number of persons with disabilities with access to work, several measures are of utmost importance:

- Changing the definition of disability in labor legislation, as well as reforming commissions (and the methodology) for professional guidance;
- Promotion and implementation of the Law on Prevention of Discrimination, prevention of abuse and mistreatment of persons with disabilities at work or when starting a job;
- Establishing a coherent system of stimulating measures for employers who engage persons with disabilities in order to avoid contradicting measures;
- Verification of and financial reimbursement for experts (personnel looking for jobs for persons with disabilities, trainers at work, personal assistants, mediators etc.);
- Reforming occupational courses for persons with disabilities in accordance with the labor market;
- Forming a registry of occupations adequate for persons with disabilities;
- Development of new educational programs and additional education in line with the labor market.

The Elderly: Social Isolation

Conclusions:

In the last ten years Serbia’s population has decreased by 220,000 and continues to fall. The speed at which the population will decline will depend on the population policy, emigration and increase in average life expectancy. United Nations experts predict that the number of older people will exceed that of young people by 2050. In Serbia, there are already as many people over 65 as there are those younger than 15. The implementation of the Government’s many existing plans³ and the preparation of new ones aimed at improving the situation of this segment of the population require much effort.

that the average time spent in these shelters is around six months, whereas afterwards women begin a new life on their own or with their children away from their violent husbands or partners. Research shows that around 92 percent of women manage to find a job and, after that, never return to the perpetrators.

³ ‘[...] some 400 million dinars will be set aside by local self-governments for the

Recommendations:

- Politically empower older persons;
- Promote participation of older persons in the labour market;
- Promote lifelong learning and training for old people;
- Recognize older persons as consumers with specific needs, interests and preferences;
- Pay attention to older persons' needs regarding housing, transport and cultural activities;
- Foster intergenerational relations through positive media reporting and campaigns;
- Promote the involvement of older persons in the civil sector and enhance the role of voluntary work;⁴
- Develop extra-institutional activities and increase the number of old people's clubs;⁵
- Improve the system of services and support for older persons at the local level in order to improve their quality of life.

Roma: Still Most Vulnerable

Conclusion:

In Serbia discrimination is a widespread phenomenon in both public and private spheres. Cases of public manifestation of racism, misogyny, xenophobia, homophobia, hate speech and other forms of discrimination are still tolerated and justified. For this reason the Serbian authorities must abide by their international commitments regarding the Roma, which implies:

- Guaranteeing the Roma the right to housing, which would ensure to them use of sanitary facilities, access to public services and employment and safety from forced evictions in the future.
- It is necessary to adopt legislation outlawing and stopping forced evictions of Roma and providing them with adequate housing.
- Amendment of the Law on Non-Contentious Proceedings should be accelerated to make it possible for all invisible persons to acquire the necessary documents.
- In addition to adopting and consistently implementing relevant legislation, it is necessary to change individuals' and society's attitude to racism and let it be known that it will not be tolerated in any form.

The Young: Escalation of Violence

development of services to the oldest beneficiaries [...] [Minister] Ljajic expects various forms of facilities for the oldest, such as home help, day hospitals and old people's clubs to be developed in 80 municipalities and towns in Serbia in three years' time. The new Law on Social Care will increase material payments to the poorest and to old people's households. The law should be fully operational in January next year and its implementation will necessitate earmarking another four billion dinars.' <http://poslovi.nsz.gov.rs>, 'Srbija zemlja starih ljudi', 12 October 2011.

⁴ Proposed strategies from 'Ageing Policy', United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, translation: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Serbia.

⁵ There are currently some 50 such clubs in Serbia, including 20 in Belgrade.

Conclusion:

While occasional fights and conflicts have long been considered part and parcel of growing up and of school atmosphere and life, the increasing use of weapons in fights, the numerical inequality of those taking part (with large groups often attacking individuals), the absurdity of the reasons for score-settling and the growing brutality indicate that violence and the culture of violence are a serious social problem. Therefore, all relevant factors must become involved in a systemic fight against the escalation of school violence. Prevention of all forms of violence among the youth calls for concerted efforts by parents, school, institutions and the community as a whole, including the involvement of problem children in various school activities, hobby groups and sports.

NATIONAL COUNCILS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

RECOMMENDATIONS

The elections for national councils have been held on June 6, 2010, in accordance to the Law on National Councils of National Minorities. 16 national councils of national minorities (Albanian, Askali, Bosniak, Bunjevak, Bulgarian, Vlach, Greek, Egyptian, Hungarian, German, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Slovak, Ukranian and Chech national minorities) have been elected in direct elections. Three more national communities (Macedonian, Slovenian and Croatian) have chosen their respective national councils via electoral assembly on the same day.

Although national councils have been formed and are performing their competences as prescribed by law, there are numerous problems in their functioning, election, financing, functioning of boards of national councils, as well as the transfer of founding rights to institutions of special importance for a national minority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider the justifiedness of the concept according to which political party participation in the process of running for the elections of members of councils are allowed and even encouraged. Although politicization of the election process will never be entirely avoided, ammendments to the law should exclude the possibility of political parties participating in the process of elections, as well as the possibility of any person performing a polititical function in any party running in the elections.

- Amendments to the law should abolish the duality of the possibility of choosing national councils (direct elections and the electoral system).
- Amendments to the law should prescribe that submitting a request for being inscribed into the voter registry can only be done in person and based on a court authenticated signature, in order to avoid misuse when being inscribed into the special voter registry (which existed during the elections for the National Councils of National Minorities in 2010).
- The law should regulate the competencies and authorities of the President of the National Council, the Executive Board as well as that of Sectoral Boards.
- The law should resolve dilemmas which are created in practice by the dualism of two institutes with "complete or partial taking over of founding rights" and "proclamation of an institution as an institution of special importance for the national minority". In addition, the Law on National Councils of National Minorities does not define the criteria based on which it could be ascertained which institutions can be proclaimed as institutions of special importance for the preservation, improvement and development of distinction and national identity of national minorities. These criteria should be defined by law and specified for each category of institutions (educational, cultural etc.).
- Reassess legal provisions which authorize national councils of national minorities to initiate proceedings for the transfer of control, managerial and supervisory authorities over educational institutions in which less than 50% of teaching is being carried out in the language of a national minority. This solution has proven in practice to be inapplicable. In addition, the transfer of founding rights onto national councils in schools in which only several classes are being taught in the language of a particular national minority can, in perspective, have a long-term negative effect on interethnic relations as a whole. Problems also arise in the area of education, relating to the realization of the rights of national councils to recommend members of the school board.