

**THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**

**A Comprehensive Review of the Situation at the National Level  
on the Occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the  
Fourth World Conference on Women and the Adoption of the  
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)**

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**Section One: Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks**

**1. What have been the most important achievements, challenges and set-backs in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years?**

The report of the Republic of Croatia on the Situation at the National Level on the Occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action covers the period from May 2014 (when the Peking+20 report was submitted) to May 2019.

Certain progress has been achieved in the last five years in most of the critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action in terms of the constitutional and legal principles of gender equality. For the first time, the Government of the Republic of Croatia specified gender equality as a separate objective of its 2016 to 2020 term of office.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia has included the goal of “eliminating gender discrimination and creating conditions for substantive equality between women and men in society” in all its annual strategic distribution plans for the 2016-2022 period. Positive changes and progress have been recorded in various areas, including raising public awareness of the human rights of women and the unacceptability of discriminatory behaviour based on gender, protecting women against violence and domestic violence, education, political participation, labour and employment, and reconciling work and family life.

A large number of activities have been organised to inform the public and target groups of the Gender Equality Act and other anti-discriminatory legal and strategic frameworks. Along with civil society organisations, and often in cooperation with them, in the past few years all national and local institutional gender equality mechanisms, as well as the responsible ministries have organised numerous public events geared towards the advocacy of women’s human rights. In doing so, particular consideration has been given to women exposed to multiple forms of discrimination, such as ethnic minority women, women with disabilities, rural women, women who are victims of violence, and other vulnerable groups of women.

One of the most common forms of cooperation between state authorities and civil society organisations has been financing projects and programmes of interest for general well-being implemented by non-governmental and other civil society organisations. The reports of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (UZU) on financing civil society organisation projects and programmes from public sources in the period 2014 to 2016 point to increased funding for women as a group of direct beneficiaries of projects and programmes. The continuity of financing and the growth tendency of allocated funds

suggest that the financing of programmes and projects implemented by civil society organisations has contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women, and raising the awareness of the human rights of women.

Along with promoting national documents, the Office for Gender Equality of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (OGE) has continuously worked on informing the public about the gender equality policies of key international organisations and forums. In this regard, in the period from 2014 to 2019 many publications have been translated and thousands of copies of them published. Among others, the Croatian translations of the Beijing Declaration, the *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW), individual recommendations of the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and strategic acts, recommendations and other documents of the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (CoE) have been published.

In the area of combating violence against women, progress has been recorded regarding the improvement of the national legal and strategic frameworks, including the ratification of the *Convention of the CoE on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention)*.

Progress has also been seen in the harmonisation of the methodology of statistical data collection and analysis with EU standards, including training programmes for professional staff, cross-sectoral cooperation of the responsible authorities, and raising the awareness of the public and social target groups of zero tolerance towards any forms of violence through implementing public campaigns and many other activities.

The statistical data of the relevant authorities suggest that since domestic violence was included as a criminal offence under the *Penal Code Amendments Act* of 2015 and since the inclusion of domestic violence as a misdemeanour in the *Act on the Protection Against Domestic Violence* of 2018, over time the number of victims of domestic violence as a misdemeanour has decreased (in 2016, the number of victims was 362; in 2018 it was 270), while the number of recorded victims of domestic violence as a criminal offence has increased (in 2016 the number of victims was 330, and in 2018 it was 635), indicating that the protection of the victims of domestic violence has increasingly taken place within the framework of criminal legislation.

However, despite the satisfactory legal framework, gender stereotypes associated with violence against women and domestic violence, not identifying various forms of violence and not reporting violent behaviour are still present and represent a significant problem. It is still necessary to work on raising knowledge and awareness among the judiciary and attorneys, on improving the statistical data recording system, on establishing more efficient cross-sectoral cooperation and cooperation with civil society organisations, as well as on training employees in bodies responsible for preventing and combating violence. In addition, it is necessary to continue raising public awareness of the need to eliminate violence against women and discrimination against women.

Positive aspects of the education system in the Republic of Croatia in the past 5 years include a further increase in the number of highly educated women: women account for 59.9% of the total number of university graduates, 60.4% of Master of Science degree holders and 55.4% of PhD holders. At the same time, from 2015 to 2018, the share of women among full professors in higher education institutions increased by 2% (from 34.2% to 36.2%) and among

docents by 2.4% (from 48.2% to 50.6%), while among assistants it decreased by 3.4% (from 55.9% to 52.5%) (source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics (CBS). *Žene i muškarci u Hrvatskoj* [Women and Men in Croatia], 2018).

There have also been improvements in human resources in science and technology. The share of women in this area increased from 41.3% in 2015 to 45.3% in 2018<sup>1</sup>. However, the employment share of men in sectors with high levels of technology and professional knowledge has been increasing, while the share of women has been decreasing. It is necessary to invest additional efforts in identifying the gap, and promoting the training and employment of a larger number of women in these sectors. Current challenges are related to the still-present segregation of education areas into so-called ‘male’ and ‘female’ sectors, later leading to gender segregation in the choice of studies and occupation, the so-called ‘female’ occupations being regularly accompanied by a lower social status and lower pay. Most attention is being paid to activities aimed at finding the answers to the question of how to increase the involvement of women in ICT and STEM areas, given their long-standing underrepresentation in this area.

In the school year 2014-2015, civic education was launched in all primary and secondary schools as an inter-subject and interdisciplinary programme, while in 30 primary schools it was implemented among 8<sup>th</sup>-graders as an optional programme. An evaluation of its implementation indicates the extraordinary satisfaction of students with the programme but also the need for further efforts in increasing the professional capacity of teachers to work with students on the full spectrum of grounds for discrimination, including making gender equality part of the education process.

The analyses of primary and secondary schoolbooks conducted from 2000 to 2016 suggest that in most schoolbooks, illustrations/photographs and texts of male figures prevail, while women most frequently occur in stereotypical roles and occupations, and gender equality as well as women’s reproductive rights occur as an issue only sporadically. As a result, the new Ordinance on Schoolbook Standards and on Members of Professional Commissions for the Assessment of Schoolbooks and other Educational Materials, adopted in 2019 by the Ministry of Science and Education (MSE), once more emphasised the obligation to appropriately promote gender equality in schoolbooks, and use illustrations of figures of both sexes in equal proportions and also nouns of both genders, particularly those denoting occupations and professions.

Besides the judiciary, women are also still significantly underrepresented in the legislature and executive, as well as in other public decision-making processes. It is encouraging that in the presidential election (in 2014) a woman was elected President of the Republic of Croatia. Progress is also evident in the increased number of women candidates on electoral lists, the share of women at the local representative and executive levels, the gender balance achieved in elections for the European Parliament, and the increased share of women appointed as state officials. It should be emphasised that the State Electoral Commission (SEC) has established a gender statistics recording system for the entire election process, from the candidacy stages to election results in terms of seats won.

Public debate and campaigns are also taking place regarding issues such as the small share of women on the steering committees and supervisory boards of listed companies, given

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<sup>1</sup> (source: Eurostat: Human resources in science and technology (HRST) (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tsc00025&language=en>).

that the share of women on boards of directors is 17.2%, on supervisory boards 20%, and in senior management positions 21%.

The launch of various initiatives related to the position of women in sports and their insufficient representation on the steering committees of sports associations, including the Croatian Olympic Committee (COC), has also been assessed as positive.

Although the Labour Force Survey suggests a decrease in female unemployment, women still make up the majority of the total number of registered unemployed persons, and are also more exposed to various forms of discrimination in the labour market. Active labour market policy measures which include the employment of women have been in place for a number of years, and have also been harmonised with the new 'Guidelines of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the Development and Implementation of Active Labour Market Policy in Croatia in 2018-2020'. Labour market challenges at the national level are associated with the need to more actively seek a solution to problems of horizontal and vertical gender segregation, raising the awareness of both employees and employers of legal provisions stipulating the right to equal pay for equal work, as well as the problems of the pension gap and the poverty of the elderly population. In cooperation with social partners, the issue of more flexible working hours also needs to be put on the national agenda as soon as possible. Age and motherhood have increasingly proved to be an obstacle to the employment and advancement of women, with employers using fixed-term employment contracts too often. In addition, the number of complaints made in courts and tribunals in terms of labour market gender-based discrimination is still far more than expected. Thus, the question of awareness of the rights regulating the labour market is also an important goal.

In the area of reconciling work and family life, the legal framework has been improved by adopting new and amending existing legislation stipulating maternity and parental benefits. In the coming period, it will be necessary to introduce and implement additional measures to encourage fathers to take parental leave more often and to increase the number of children in day care. The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy (MDFYSP) has supported a number of projects aimed at improving material conditions in pre-school institutions, having longer working hours, implementing alternative education programmes, providing meals for children, and fitting out childcare facilities.

Stereotypes of the gender role of women have been a permanent obstacle to the broader participation of women in the labour market, as well as in political and public decision-making processes. Despite the progress made in various areas in the past five years, it is necessary to speed up the dynamics of achieving the substantive equality of men and women, including intensified gender mainstreaming.

**2. Which of the following have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programmes? (please check relevant categories)**

2.1 Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice

With the amendments to the *Gender Equality Act* (GEA) in 2017, the question of comprehensive protection against victimisation was regulated with the aim of full harmonisation of the provisions of the GEA with the provisions of Article 24 of 'Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation'. GEA provisions were harmonised with the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act by additionally expanding the circle of persons placed under the scope of guaranteed protection against discrimination, with the aim of strengthening the legal protection of victims, which was the aim of the European Commission recommendation.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted a new 'National Anti-Discrimination Plan for 2017-2022' in line with the Anti-Discrimination Act.

The Croatian Government's Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities (OHRRNM) has started preparing a new 'National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights for 2019-2024'.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Courts Act, since 2015 the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has kept records on all court employees, with the aim of answering the question of whether women are guaranteed the same employment opportunities in the judiciary under the same conditions. As has been mentioned earlier, women make up the majority in the judiciary, with the exception of the Supreme Court, where they made up 39.5% of employees in 2017, and the Constitutional Court, where they made up 40% in 2015 and 23.1% in 2017.

In July 2015, the 'National Strategy for the Development of a Support System for Victims and Witnesses in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2016-2020' was adopted. Support and help for victims and witnesses is provided by departments responsible for extending support to them. These have been established as part of seven county courts. The purpose of the departments is to provide support to victims of criminal offences and to lessen the stress of testifying and appearing in court. They are in charge of providing emotional support to victims/witnesses before, during and after court proceedings, providing information on their rights and information about the stages of criminal and misdemeanour proceedings, ensuring that victims and witnesses are placed in a separate room, ensuring the accompaniment of victims and witnesses when giving evidence, and offering referrals to specialised institutions, depending on the needs of the victims, witnesses or those accompanying them.

Under the Free Legal Aid Act, in force since January 2014, victims of violence as a criminal offence are, without any assessment of their financial situation, provided with access to secondary legal aid (which includes representation by a lawyer, and exemption from the costs of court proceedings and court fees) in proceedings in which they claim their rights to receiving compensation for damage caused by the committing of the criminal offence

In terms of exercising the right to legal aid and access to the courts and other public authorities under equal conditions, in the period from September 2016 to September 2017, a total of 5,336 legal aid beneficiaries were identified, of whom 2,273 were men and 3,063 women. From October 2017 to August 2018, according to the data of the legal aid information system, secondary legal aid was awarded to 5,141 persons, of whom 3,016 (58.7%) were women.

In 2017, the MoJ financed 16 projects of NGOs and law clinics for providing primary legal aid. The NGO projects were linked with providing legal aid to disadvantaged social groups, such as socially deprived persons, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, victims of violence, and applicants for international protection, and also activities associated with protecting women's rights.

The 'Network of Support and Cooperation for Victims and Witnesses of Criminal Offences' programme was established in January 2018 with the aim of providing help and support to victims and witnesses at the county level in 13 counties in Croatia in which there are no county court offices providing support to victims and witnesses. The Network includes 10 non-governmental organisations, most of which actively provide support to women victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence. The MoJ will provide funding for the Network in the next three years.

The Judicial Academy on a regular basis organises several seminars a year on human rights, including non-discrimination on the grounds of sex, for judges, legal secretaries, state attorneys and judicial body officials. The Judicial Academy cooperates with the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) in Brussels, the Academy of European Law (ERA) in Trier and the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Luxembourg. These institutions provide assistance and support to national judiciary schools in organising professional training on European Union law for judicial officials.

A seminar which has been organised on a regular basis for several years now relates to the application of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, discussing European Court of Human Rights case law with a focus on the prohibition of discrimination, and on distinguishing between the rights stipulated by Articles 14 and 1 of Protocol No. 12.

In 2016, a seminar for municipal and county courts was introduced dealing with compensation for damage and restitution in cases of discrimination, protection of the dignity of workers, and also bullying, with an analysis of the case law of courts in labour disputes and disputes on the protection of the dignity of workers based on the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act, Gender Equality Act and Labour Act, as well as case law. Since 2018, seminars have been held relating to discrimination disputes in employment relationships and the application of European Court of Human Rights case law in labour disputes in court proceedings in Croatia.

The Judicial Academy, in cooperation with the Centre for Peace Studies, has organised an online course on the basic principles of anti-discrimination legislation for judicial officials. In addition, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Judicial Academy has organised an online course on combating racism, homophobia and transphobia for judicial officials.

The Police Academy has conducted a training course called 'Specialised Juvenile Delinquency, Crimes against Young People, and Family Training' for 27 criminal investigation officers, with the aim of providing equal access to justice for women.

In 2017, as part of the 'Support to Gender Equality' twinning project, and in cooperation with the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Vienna and the Judicial Academy, the OGE organised three seminars for misdemeanour court judges on raising the level of knowledge and expertise of judges on labour law from the perspective of gender equality. The purpose of these specialised seminars was to train judges and improve their efficiency, increase confidence in



the legal system, and motivate victims of gender-based discrimination to seek the protection of their rights in the courts. *Gender Equality Law in Practice: A Manual for Judges and Legal Practitioners* was published in Croatian and English and distributed in cooperation with the Judicial Academy.

One of the stages of the EU project ‘Building more effective protection: Transforming the system for combating violence against women’, carried out by the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality of the Republic of Croatia, was an expert analysis of final court verdicts in cases of violence perpetrated against women in the period 2012-2016 based on a sample of 18 courts from 11 towns, along with the implementation of expert training.

The OGE has translated, published and distributed General Recommendation No. 33 on women’s access to justice of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the Committee), which is accessible on its website.

## [2.2 Eliminating violence against women and girls](#)

The Republic of Croatia signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in January 2013, and ratified it in April 2018 by adopting *the Act ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted a new, fourth ‘*National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence*’ for the period 2017-2022 (and earlier for the period 2011-2016). It covers 7 areas, from prevention, support to victims of violence, the psychosocial treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence, the improvement of cross-sectoral cooperation, to training experts on protection against domestic violence, and raising public awareness of the problem of domestic violence. Each National Strategy measure is based on one or more articles of the Istanbul Convention, providing it with added value. The MDFYSP coordinates the implementation of the measures stipulated by both documents.

The new *Protection against Domestic Violence Act* that entered into force on 1 January 2018 amended the definition of domestic violence, stipulated certain responsibilities of the bodies in charge of treating victims of domestic violence, and amended the provisions of protection measures.

The *Cross-sectoral Cooperation Agreement on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* was signed at the end of 2018 by seven ministers with the support of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, the General State Attorney, the President of the Supreme Court, the President of the High Misdemeanour Court, the Ombudspersons for Children, for Persons with Disabilities and for Gender Equality, as well as the head of the OGE. Based on the Agreement, a national team and county teams for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence were formed.

In 2018, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the new, updated ‘*Rules of Procedure in Cases of Sexual Violence*’, which contain the obligations of the competent authorities and other bodies involved in identifying and combating sexual violence and providing help and protection to persons exposed to sexual violence, and regulate the course and content of cooperation between the competent authorities in the treatment of victims of sexual violence.

The preparation of the new '*Rules of Procedure in Cases of Domestic Violence*' is in its final stage. The normative framework for adopting these rules is provided by internationally binding and national documents stipulating protection against domestic violence. The aim of the '*Rules of Procedure*' is to provide the timely and efficient implementation of existing regulations on the protection of victims of domestic violence in accordance with the powers of the competent authorities, improving cooperation and in the long-run achieving a reduction in violent behaviour.

For the purpose of regulating the status and rights of victims of sexual violence in the Croatian Homeland War, in 2015 the *Rights of Victims of Sexual Violence during the Armed Aggression against the Republic of Croatia in the Homeland War Act* was adopted.

As part of the framework of penal mechanisms, a series of substantive procedural improvements should be emphasised, such as including domestic violence as a criminal offence in the 2015 *Amendments to the Penal Code Act*, and the stipulation of a series of measures protecting, inter alia, the privacy of the personal and family life of witnesses and victims from secondary victimisation, and the expansion of the definition of 'victim' under the 2017 *Act Amending the Criminal Procedure Act*.

### [2.3 Political participation and representation](#)

In the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the 2016-2020 term of office it was stated that, in promoting gender equality as an individual goal, the inclusion of women in political and public life will be encouraged.

In the past five years, women have held, and currently hold, some of the most important offices of state, including the President of the Republic, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Deputy Prime Minister, and the Ministers of Foreign and European Affairs; Culture; Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy; Regional Development and European Union Funds. The former Minister of Economy was also a woman. Currently, the share of women ministers in the Government is 20%.

Of a total of 137 appointed state officials, there are 44 state secretaries in ministries and 93 assistant ministers. The share of women among appointed state officials is 39.4%. Of the 44 state secretaries, 36.3% are women, while the share of women assistant ministers is 40.8%. The share of women ambassadors increased from 24.1% in 2015 to 27.3% in 2017.

Progress has also been achieved in the increase in the number of female candidates in parliamentary, local and EU Parliament elections in line with the obligation stipulated by the Gender Equality Act for all political parties and other authorised proposers of electoral lists for representative bodies to respect the gender quota of a minimum of 40% of representatives of a gender on lists. However, although the share of female candidates in the last parliamentary elections in 2016 was 39.7%, they at present make up only 21% of the members of the current parliament.

The local elections held in 2017 brought about an increase in the share of women at the representative and executive levels. Compared to 2013, the number of women municipal councillors increased by approximately 10.3% (from 15.7% to 26%), the number of women city councillors by almost 4% (from 23.1% to 27%), and women county councillors by 6.1% (from 20.7 to 26.8%). Although no women county prefects were elected, the number of deputy

women county prefects increased by 7.4% compared to 2013, i.e. from 22.2% to 29.6%. The share of women mayors increased by 1.6%, and the share of women deputy mayors by 4%. The share of women municipal presidents increased by approximately 2%, and the share of women municipal deputy presidents increased by approximately 4% (sources: Croatian Bureau of Statistics, “Žene i muškarci u Hrvatskoj” [Women and Men in Croatia], 2018 and SEC).

Gender parity was achieved at the previous elections to the European Parliament (EP) in 2014, when out of 11 members from the Republic of Croatia, 6 women (54.5%) and 5 men were elected. Good results were also achieved in the last elections to the EP, held on 26 May 2019, when out of 12 members to the EP, 5 women, i.e. 41.6% were elected.

The abovementioned suggests that progress has been made in individual segments, but it is necessary to continue working on achieving a gender balance in the political representation of women at all levels.

#### [2.4 Right to work and rights at work \(e.g. gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression\)](#)

Active labour market policy measures which have been implemented for a number of years are of great significance in reducing female unemployment and improving the position of women in the labour market.

Women make up the majority of the total number of persons included in active labour market policy measures. In the 2014-2018 period, 182,483 persons were included in active labour market policy measures, of whom 104,899 were women, which was 57.5% of all persons included. For this purpose, 757,713,405.70 euros (5,607,079,202.40 kn) were allocated.

According to Eurostat LFS data, the number of employed women (24-64 years of age) is increasing, and their employment rate increased from 55.9% in 2015 to 58.3% in 2017, and to 61.7% in the first quarter of 2018. The unemployment rate fell from 16.9% in 2015 to 11.9% in 2017. However, the share of women among the inactive population is still around 58.8%.

In 2017, the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds (MRDEUF) prepared its ‘*Strategy of Regional Development of the Republic of Croatia until 2020*’. One of its specific goals “An increase in the sustainable self-employment of unemployed persons, particularly women”, expressly singled out women as a separate category of unemployed persons. Funds from European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) are being utilised for measures for the employment of women.

The Ministry of Labour and the Pension System (MLPS) is implementing a job creation programme for women called ‘Make a Wish’, financed from the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the ‘Efficient Human Resources 2014-2020’ operational programme. The programme has been implemented since 2016 and aims to employ 7,500 women, and to provide support for and take care of almost 30,000 elderly and disadvantaged persons. This is one of the special measures and positive actions enabling access to employment and the labour market for women in vulnerable groups, focusing on remote, hard-to-reach rural and island areas, and the empowerment and improvement of the employment potential of hard-to-employ women and women with a low level of education in their local communities. This special measure should mitigate the consequences of their unemployment and risk of poverty, at the same time encouraging social inclusion. The target groups of the call for proposals are unemployed women

registered at the Croatian Employment Service (CES), irrespective of the length of their unemployment (focusing on women aged over 50, women with disabilities, women victims of trafficking, women victims of domestic violence, women asylees, young women out of the institutional care and foster family system, educational institutions, etc., recovering drug addicts, women ex-convicts having served a prison sentence in the past 6 months, women members of the Roma ethnic minority, homeless women, and women without higher education). Women participating in project activities can gain the knowledge and skills necessary for the labour market through additional training, with the aim of becoming more competitive on the labour market upon project completion. Upon finishing the training, women included in the project obtain a training certificate. This activity has a great impact on the labour activation of women and increases their employability beyond the end of the project. Jobs include the care of elderly persons and persons in a disadvantaged position in their local communities in hard-to-access areas and in areas with an unemployment rate higher than the Croatian average. The Programme is implemented by local and regional government and self-government units and/or civil society organisations. The call is worth approximately 135 million euros.

Several projects were implemented during the reporting period with the aim of strengthening the position of women on the labour market. As part of the EU Twinning project 'Support to Gender Equality', financed with 600,000 euros, implemented by the OGE in the course of 2016 and 2017 with the Finnish National Institute for Health and Social Services as a partner, the national campaign 'Inequality is not Part of Your Job' was carried out. As part of the campaign, 1,500 posters were created and displayed on public transport in four Croatian cities over two weeks, two radio adverts were produced and aired over the course of one month on 52 radio stations, and public campaigns were organised in four cities, involving many public figures, on which occasions advertising materials were distributed. Practical information was also included on the OGE website for cases of gender-based discrimination in the workplace, harassment and sexual harassment.

From October 2013 until April 2016, the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality carried out the project 'Dismantling the Glass Labyrinth: Equal Opportunity Access to Economic Decision-making in Croatia', financed from EC funds as part of the Progress programme. The total project value was 250,000 euros. The aim of the project was to raise awareness and promote the need for a balanced representation of women and men in management positions in companies. Four studies were conducted as part of the project, including on the representation of women and men in management positions, the way men and women employers perceive the benefits of gender balance in business decision-making, and the way business women perceive possible obstacles to management positions. In cooperation with the Croatian Employers' Association (CEA), the Business Women Base was created in 2016.

A new EU project of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality called 'Equal Rights – Equal Pay – Equal Pensions – Expanding the Scope of Implementation of Gender Equality Actions and Legal Standards towards Achieving Gender Equality and Combating Poverty in Croatia', worth 468,510.20 euros, is being implemented from October 2018 until September 2020.

On its website, the OGE regularly informs the public of the marking of European Equal Pay Day. The gender pay gap in the Republic of Croatia is resistant at around 11%, which is below the EU average.

Occupational segregation is still largely evident, thus following previous trends, with a significant underrepresentation of women in the STEM and ICT sectors. We refer you to the CBS statistical data in the annex to this report, called *Žene i muškarci u Hrvatskoj* [Women and Men in Croatia], as well as the answers to question No.12.

### 2.5 Work-family conciliation / paid maternity and parental leave

With the purpose of creating a more favourable environment and financial conditions, the Republic of Croatia has strongly advocated the implementation of family support measures. During the reporting period, the legislation regulating maternity and parental allowances, as well as child allowances, was improved. With the *Act Amending the Maternity and Parental Allowances Act*, in force since 1 July 2017, the maximum amount of parental leave for employed parents, and the allowance for certain other groups of beneficiaries were increased in order to additionally encourage both parents to benefit from parental leave.

With the adoption of the *Act Amending the Child Allowance Act* in 2018, the income threshold for exercising the right to child allowance per household member was increased from 50% to 70% of the calculation basis, paving the way for a larger number of potential child allowance and pro-natality supplement beneficiaries.

In Croatia, every parent has the right to a four-month period of parental leave, of which two months are non-transferable from one parent to the other. Hence, one parent can use a maximum of 6 months of parental leave, and the transferable two months is lost unless both parents have been on parental leave. In Croatia, pay during parental leave is still limited to 3,991 kn per month, which is less than the average monthly pay. Comparative studies have shown that fathers mostly take parental leave when their pay is lower than their wife's. A part of the reason for the low participation of fathers should be looked for in other factors such as traditional perceptions of parenthood and the father's role in early childhood, the working environment and a lack of understanding on the part of employers, as well as the social environment in general, which is often not supportive of fathers actively caring for their children.

In the period from 2014 to 2018, the MDFYSP announced five calls for proposals for NGOs providing support to families and promoting children's rights. A total of 1,977,972.97 euros (14,637,000.00 kn) were allocated to implement 233 NGO projects in the period from 2014 to 2018.

With a view to demographic renewal, by providing the conditions for children's optimal development, assistance to parents in terms of children's safety and childcare, and fostering a better balance and reconciliation of family and work, in 2018 the MDFYSP launched an ESF co-financed project called 'Improving Early Childhood and Preschool Childcare and Education Services: Day-care Centres for a More Balanced Life', worth a total of 40.5 million euros (300 million kn). Within the framework of this project, new programmes will be introduced, the opening hours of day-care centres adjusted to parents' needs, and day-care facilities fitted out. The project will enable the training and employment of new day-care centre employees.

The aforementioned projects will include 4,704 children and 472 day-care teachers and assistants. The projects are implemented by day-care centres in cooperation with local communities. By the end of 2018, 50 projects worth 30,176,468.88 euros (223,239,269.77 kn) had been contracted.

With the amendments to the *Pension Insurance Act*, which entered into force on 1 January 2019, a category of additional working years was introduced for all mothers and adoptive mothers. Irrespective of the use of maternity or parental leave, or whether they gave birth prior to or after the entry into force of this act, it is stipulated that in calculating pension years, for each biological and adopted child six months are added to the total number of working years. This measure is aimed at mitigating the gender pension gap within the framework of the pension scheme and thus protecting motherhood.

In view of the special circumstances related to the diplomatic profession, the new 2017 MFEA Ordinance on Internal Organisation regulates the right of women MFEA employees to maternity/parental leave during their term in diplomatic and consular representation offices.

From January 2016 to January 2018, the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality was the holder of the EU project 'In Pursuit of Full Equality Between Men and Women: Reconciliation of Professional and Family Life', financed from the European Commission programme called 'Rights, Equality and Citizenship' (REC), aimed at the economic empowerment of women. The project's value was 437,172.29 euros. Project goals were associated with eliminating gender-based occupational stereotypes, reconciliation of private and professional life, raising the awareness of employers of the importance of a sensitised approach to mothers, and promoting the active role of fathers in the formative years of a child's development. It is also referred to in the answers to question 7.

### **3. Over the past five years, have you taken specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination? (please check relevant categories)**

#### 3.1 Women living in remote and rural areas

According to the *Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Croatia for 2014-2020*, the share of permanently employed women farmers is about 40%, while at the same time women farmers earn about 14% less than their male counterparts.

According to the 2018 data provided by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), women were the owners of 30.37% of family farms (FF), which is almost the same share as in the course of 2017 and 2016. Women owners of FFs are to a large extent older than 65 (44.36%), which is similar to men FF owners (36.54% of them are older than 65). According to the MoA, a slight decrease in women FF owners was among the changes recorded in 2016, while the same percentage of women owners of small businesses and cooperatives was maintained. The aforementioned indicates a trend towards more flexible and specialised organisational models and types of production more suitable for increasing farm competitiveness.

Projects as part of the measures of the *Rural Development Programme in the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020* contribute to the improvement of the position of women in rural areas.

The diversification of non-agricultural activities has increased the opportunities for more active women entrepreneurship through traditional crafts, trades and non-agricultural activities in rural areas, providing women with more opportunities to use and provide services which so far have experienced a deficit, such as childcare and care for the elderly. Incentives through the aforementioned measures for women in rural areas provide opportunities to work full time or part time, as well as for independent business activities with flexible working hours. In the course of 2018, 7,666 projects from the Rural Development Programme were contracted. Women were the beneficiaries in 1,376 projects (18%).<sup>2</sup>

International Day of Rural Women (15 October) is regularly marked by various events at the national and local levels.

The OGE has translated, printed, promoted and published on its website *General Recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, which clarifies the obligations of States Parties. The Recommendation has been forwarded to county commissions for gender equality, and the Ministry of Agriculture has been sent 300 copies, which it has forwarded to affiliates of agricultural advisory services at local levels for educational purposes.

A representative of the OGE is a member of the Implementation Monitoring Committee for the *Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020* and the Implementation Monitoring Committee for the *Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Operational Programme for the Programming Period 2014-2020* of the MoA.

### 3.2 Ethnic minority women

The National Minority Council, as an umbrella body established on the basis of the *Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities*, deals with general minority issues, including financing the projects of ethnic minority members from the state budget. In the Republic of Croatia, there are 17 communities of different ethnic minorities, for whom eight seats are reserved in the Croatian Parliament. Of these eight members of Parliament, two are women: the representative of the Serbian ethnic minority and the representative of the Albanian minority. The vice-president of the National Minority Council belongs to the Serbian ethnic minority.

To carry out projects related to ethnic minority women, in 2015 the National Minority Council financed 28 projects to the amount of 224,500.00 kuna. In 2016, 25 projects were financed to the amount of 466,000.00 kuna, and in 2017, 25 programmes were financed to the sum of 727,000.00 kuna. In 2018, 20 projects were financed with 394,500.00 kuna. In the 2015-2018 reporting period, a total of 98 projects amounting to 242,162.16 euros (1,792,000.00 kn) were supported.

Several recent studies have confirmed that there are statistically significant disparities between Roma women and men in almost all spheres of life, in particular in the fields of education, employment and inclusion in social life, and therefore the fact that the '*National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the Period 2013-2020*' also includes a gender dimension has been assessed as a positive development. Among the Strategy's goals and measures, there are

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<sup>2</sup> From the 2018 Activity Report of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality.

elements associated with the promotion of Roma women's human rights and gender equality, equal labour market opportunities, gender sensitive education, equality in decision-making processes in political and public life, elimination of violence against women, improvement of the protection of women's reproductive health, the health of pregnant women and children, as well as reducing teenage pregnancy, improving the quality, accessibility and timeliness of social services and services in the community, with a special emphasis on women, children, and young people, the empowerment of the local Roma community to identify the risks of exposure to the phenomena of people trafficking, sexual abuse and other forms of violence aimed primarily against women and children, and strengthening the capacity of NGOs and other forms of association of members of the Roma national minority.

The OHRRNM is in charge of preparing and monitoring the '*National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the Period 2013-2020*'. The Governmental Office for Cooperation with NGOs (UZU) and National Minority Council are also participating in the allocation of funds to Roma women associations. 'The Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the Period 2013-2020' indicates that a series of projects in the reporting period have been dedicated to the empowerment of Roma women, and we have therefore singled out only the most important ones.

In 2016 and 2017, the OHRRNM implemented a project called 'National Roma Platform: Living Equality' worth 68,635.00 euros, with a special focus on the position of Roma women.

The UZU announced several tenders financed from the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). As part of the tender 'Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society Organisations to Ensure Effective Implementation of EU Standards in Exercising Human Rights', 22 projects were financed, of which 7 were focused on improving the access of members of the Roma national minority to human rights, the total value being 861,824.79 euros. Some of the implemented projects dedicated to the protection of ethnic minority women were financed from the EU Programme for Equality, Rights and Citizenship. Thus, in 2016-2017, the Roma women organisation *Romsko srce* [Roma Heart] of Jagodnjak implemented the 'Marry When You Are Ready' project, dealing with the problem of arranged and forced marriages of girls aged 9 to 15 in Roma communities.

In 2017, the County of Međimurje, which has the highest share of the Roma population, organised training and informing sessions for the Roma population, in particular Roma women, on problems associated with various forms of discrimination and violence against women. In addition, a reprint of the *Žene za ravnopravnost* [Women for Equality] brochure was co-financed, presenting the results of a study on the position of Roma women.

Numerous other events, round tables, documentary film productions, etc. organised by the OHRRNM, OGE, women representatives of NGOs, the Association of Roma of the Republic of Croatia and others took place during the reporting period. For example, in 2015 a round table called [The Position of Roma Women in the Republic of Croatia] in which Roma activists, NGO representatives and Roma national minority councils participated, was held in Zagreb. The OGE head gave a presentation called 'OGE Activities to Improve the Position of Roma Women'. Conclusions were reached which include overall support for the idea of forming a national network of Roma women of Croatia, and continuing cooperation by



organising thematic gatherings with the aim of promoting women's rights and providing support to NGOs and women activists.

The CES has been implementing Roma women active labour market policy measures. The number of employed Roma women has continuously increased. Thus, in 2014, 415 Roma women were employed, and in 2018, 629 of them. It is encouraging that, year after year, the number of Roma women who have found employment on the open labour market has increased, even without active labour market policy measures. In 2014, 107 Roma women were employed on the open labour market, and in 2018, 281 Roma women.

The OGE funded the Bolja budućnost [Better Future] Roma women's organisation website, as well as the regional event Kraljica Teuta [Queen Teuta] of the Albanian Women's Club organisation called Kraljica Teuta.

### 3.3 Women living with disabilities

The Republic of Croatia adopted the '*National Strategy of Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020*'. There is a large number of participants taking part in implementing the strategy, although the activities of the Croatian Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (SOIH), established 45 years ago, are particularly outstanding, as are those of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities, an institution which has been active for 11 years, and also those of the CES, which implements incentive measures for the employment of persons with disabilities.

SOIH's Network of Women with Disabilities has for eight years been conducting its 'White Ribbon Campaign: 16 Days of Women's Activism against Gender-based Violence', commencing on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and ending on 10 December on International Human Rights Day. The campaign is supported by the OGE, OHRRNM and the City of Zagreb. The campaign includes a whole range of activities designed to raise public awareness, from numerous events on town squares and in day-care centres, schools and other educational institutions, to press releases, presentations, round tables and forums. Goals also include encouraging men and boys to get actively involved in combating violence. Every year, the campaign's slogan is associated with the elimination of violence against women with disabilities. At the round table 'Zero Tolerance of Violence', organised in 2015, the OGE head presented the Croatian edition of the brochure 'What should you do if someone hurts you or does bad things to you?' The brochure contains information about gender-based violence for persons with disabilities and was printed with the financial support of the OGE. The Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities points out that women with disabilities, in particular blind, deaf, blind-deaf or those with intellectual disabilities, are less inclined to report violence because they feel that institutions and their staff still question their evidence as victims, while shelters for women with disabilities need to be architecturally adapted to enable accessibility. In this area, additional efforts are needed for improvement.

According to data provided by the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), in 2017 victims of domestic violence included 92 persons with disabilities (0.74% of the total number of victims), of whom 52 were female (56.5%). Although there has been a slight decline in the number of

victims, an example of good practice is the SOS hotline for women with disabilities, established by SOIH's Network of Women with Disabilities.

In accordance with the *Protection against Family Violence Act*, the MoI has prepared leaflets to inform victims of criminal offences of their rights. In addition, individual assessments of victims are made to identify special protection needs. In their response, police officers are obliged to modify their actions and provide adequate support with regard to the specific needs of victims with disabilities.

In May 2018, the First Conference of Women with Disabilities was held on the topic of 'The Position of Women with Disabilities in the Republic of Croatia', which was organised by SOIH.

Measures to encourage self-employment and increase the participation of women with disabilities in the labour market were also incorporated into the '*National Strategy of Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020*'. The share of woman in the employment of persons with disabilities has gradually increased, and their share in 2018 was 42.46% (Source: CES). As early as 2014, the new Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Act entered into force, stipulating that for every 20 employees, employers have to employ one person with a disability, or otherwise they have to pay a special contribution for their rehabilitation and employment. As with the general employment of woman with disabilities, in the observed period a slight increase in including women with disabilities in active labour market policy measures has been recorded, and among the newly-included 42% are women. In 2018, the share of women in the number of self-employed persons with disabilities was 33.3%.

According to data from 2016, most clinical hospital centres and general/specialised hospitals have gynaecological examination tables adapted to the needs of women with disabilities. It can be concluded that in the healthcare system there are at least 245 gynaecological examination tables adapted to the needs of women with disabilities. In view of the aforementioned data, there is a relatively high amount of accessible and adapted gynaecological examination tables for women with disabilities.

Personal assistance services for persons with the highest grades and types of disability, persons with intellectual and mental impairments, and persons needing intense forms of care, are financed within the framework of the 'Developing a Personal Assistance Service for Persons with Disabilities' programme. As a result of projects contracted in 2016-2017, which were worth a total of 14,312,726.08 euros (105,914,173.06 kn), personal assistance service was provided to 946 persons with disabilities, of whom 503 were women. On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2018, 135 organisations signed 157 contracts worth 39.6 million euros (293 million kn). 41.2 million euros are available within the programme framework, including 20.9 million euros from the European Social Fund, and 20.3 million euros from games of chance and the National Fund. The contract signing ceremony was attended by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia. By means of the contracts signed, personal assistants for 1,550 persons with disabilities, 80 interpreters for Croatian sign language, and 39 companions were provided. Please also refer to the answer to question 10.1 with respect to the *Act Amending the Social Welfare Act*.

### 3.4 Women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities

In 2014, the Same-Sex Life Partnership Act was adopted, regulating the status and rights of persons of same-sex sexual orientation in the legal order of the Republic of Croatia. The aforementioned act was passed by the Croatian Parliament as an organic law, comprehensively regulating the civil status of same-sex partnerships. In November 2014, the Ordinance on the method of collecting medical documentation, and determining conditions and assumptions for gender change or life in another gender identity was enacted. In the course of 2017, the Croatian Parliament amended the Personal Names Act and the Aliens Act to comply with the Same-Sex Life Partnership Act.

### 3.5 Younger women

Since 2012, the Advisory Council on Youth of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (the Council) has been active. The Council's expert and administrative operations are carried out by the MDFYSP. In 2018, a representative of youth organisations and organisations for young people was elected Council president. The Council's main task is to follow the activities of ministries and other state administration bodies in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies on young people that fall within their scope of operations, and to provide opinions and recommendations; to follow the development of youth organisations and NGOs for young people, and to make recommendations to improve their work and support system; to give recommendations for the development of policies on young people at local, regional, national and European levels, and to follow and react to events in society of relevance to young people.

In 2018, the MDFYSP commenced preparing the National Youth Programme 2019-2025. The launch of a public consultation on the draft proposal of this document is foreseen for the second half of 2019. Gender equality was included as one of the general principles of action in the implementation of the National Youth Programme.

In conformity with the obligations of EU Member States committed to the setting-up of the Youth Guarantee of Council Recommendation 2013 (2013/C 120/01), with the aim of a structured approach to solving the problem of the high youth unemployment rate, an Implementation Plan was prepared as part of the National Reform Programme in April 2014, and implementation measures incorporated into the Efficient Human Resources Operational Programme. Most of the measures carried out involved an approximately equal number of women and men. The MLPS Report on implementing the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan indicates that professional training without a work contract, a measure intended to enable young persons who have completed their studies but have no work experience to acquire the necessary work experience, in the period 2014-2018 included 63,877 young people under 30 years of age, of whom 71.95% were women. In the aforementioned period, 382,033,886.80 euros (2,827,050,762.52 kn) were paid out.

## **4. Has the increasing number of humanitarian crises—caused by conflict, extreme weather or other events—affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country?**

From the beginning of the migration crisis in 2015, the Republic of Croatia has made efforts to contribute as much as possible to the mitigation of its impact upon all affected persons. In the course of 2015 and 2016, care was provided for more than 600,000 non-regular migrants, of whom 31% were women, on their route through Croatia. Thanks to the engagement of all state authorities, the Croatian Red Cross and numerous NGOs, Croatia was able to provide accommodation, food, toilet articles and the necessary healthcare to all migrants. As part of European Union relocation and resettlement mechanisms, Croatia took more than 200 beneficiaries of international protection from Italy, Greece and Turkey, of whom 106 were women. In 2019, Croatia committed itself to taking another 150 third-country nationals or stateless persons based on solidarity among EU Member States. In terms of the framework of legal regulations, in response to the migration crisis, an ‘Action Plan for the Integration of Persons who have been Granted International Protection for the Period from 2017 to 2019’ was adopted. In May 2018, the *Aliens Act*, stipulating measures to ensure return in a way which is in the best interest of vulnerable groups and preventing the return of persons who were victims of human trafficking, was amended.

In 2018, the Police Academy conducted two specialised training sessions for 97 border police officers on topics that included the treatment of women, in particular women refugees and women asylum seekers. A seminar for criminal investigation officers dealing with juvenile delinquency and crimes against young people and families was also important, and covered the treatment of women asylum seekers, women migrants and unaccompanied children as a special topic.

The Judicial Academy, in cooperation with the Croatian Law Centre, organised a seminar for judicial staff on procedures for granting international protection.

The CES has continuously been offering support to unemployed migrant women to enable their integration into the labour market. In the period between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2018, there were 174 entries in the register of women who have been granted international protection. All migrant women went through a consultation process to establish their work potential and employment opportunities, and job-seeking plans were drawn up for them, as well as additional activities aimed at contributing to their quicker integration into the labour market. In the period 2014-2018, 199 individual consultations were carried out, which in 31 cases resulted in employment.

The Republic of Croatia has been continuously improving its international protection system for asylum seekers. In terms of applications for international protection, it is ensured that the interpreter and the official person are of the same sex as the applicant, and the ‘Questionnaire and Observations for Early Identification of Asylum Seekers Having Suffered a Traumatic Experience’ are used. The reception centre for asylum seekers provides a gynaecologist and a paediatrician, as well as transport to specialised medical examinations in medical institutions. Doctors of the World (*Médecins du Monde*, MDM) from Belgium have been implementing the project ‘Empowering Women and Children in the Migrant Population for Action against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence – WE ACT’ at the reception centre. In the past few years, psychological and social services and support to asylum seekers in reception centres in Zagreb and Kutina have also been provided by the Croatian Red Cross. In individual and group consultations, asylum seekers are acquainted with the risks of human trafficking and gender-based violence, and also means of prevention and protection, with a focus on

unaccompanied children and women. NGOs which provide support and help to women asylum seekers who have been victims of violence or of trafficking in human beings, such as legal aid, language courses and life skills training, also operate in the reception centre.

**5. Which of the following does your country consider to be the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country for the coming five years through laws, policies and programmes? (please check relevant categories)**

The *Programme of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for its 2016-2020 term of office* states that within the framework of promoting gender equality as an individual goal, the policies of the Government of the Republic of Croatia focus in particular on gender equality in the labour market, and in political and public life, the reconciliation of work and family life, and protection from all forms of violence, including the protection of victims of domestic violence.

5.1 Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice

The Government of the Republic of Croatia has included ‘Eliminating gender discrimination and creating conditions for substantive equality between women and men in society’ among the priority goals in each of its annual strategic plans for the 2016-2022 period, along with sub-goals 1) ‘Raising public awareness of the various forms of discrimination still present in private and public life and legal protection mechanisms’, and 2) ‘The gradual creation of conditions to mainstream gender equality in public policies at all levels’.

Permanent priorities are also defined by the Gender Equality Act, which also includes the adoption of a new *National Gender Equality Policy for the 2019-2022 period*.

5.2 Eliminating violence against women and girls

With the ratification of the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, and with its entry into force in October 2018, the Republic of Croatia committed to its consistent implementation. A National team for preventing and combating domestic violence and violence against women was formed. A priority is future efficient implementation of the Istanbul Convention, including amendments to penal legislation, increasing the number of shelters for women victims of violence, and introducing a permanent 24/7 SOS telephone hotline.

5.3 Right to work and rights at work and female entrepreneurship

The Council of the EU Presidency Programme of the Republic of Croatia between 1 January and 1 July 2020 states promoting gender equality, empowerment of women, and equality in the labour market among its priorities.

In this context, it emphasises the following: “Although enshrined as a fundamental value of the European Union, equality between women and men has not yet been achieved. In view of the new term of office of the European Parliament and the European Commission, as well as the preparations for creating new EU policies after 2020, it is crucial that the EU reaffirms its

commitment to strengthening gender equality and the promotion of equality and non-discrimination. Gender equality and the economic independence of women are crucial for sustainable economic growth and a precondition for fulfilling greater, long-term political goals such as the goals of the A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Europe 2020, particularly in areas such as employment, reduction of poverty and marginalisation.

Therefore, one of the priorities in the course of the Croatian Presidency is to support the increased participation of women in the labour market, with a special focus on activities whose purpose is identifying and eliminating obstacles to increasing women's activity rate, such as insufficient affordable childcare and care for dependent elderly family members, etc. As part of new legislation regulating work-life balance, the Croatian Presidency will examine the link between the problem of the ageing population and childcare in Member States and the inactivity rate for women in the labour market in the European Union."

In the joint EU Trio Declaration on Equality between Women and Men, signed in March 2019 by Romania, Finland and Croatia as the Trio Presidency of the Council of the EU in the period from 1 January 2019 to 1 July 2020, the Republic of Croatia emphasised boosting the participation of women in the labour market as a priority, including increased participation of women in the labour market by developing an enabling framework of action and a decent working environment adapted to the professional and personal needs of women. On the basis of this, on 30 and 31 of January 2020 an international conference entitled "Participation of Women in the Labour Market – Benefit for the Society!" will be held in Zagreb.

With the aim of promoting the economic empowerment of women, the Republic of Croatia will continue encouraging the involvement of women in entrepreneurship, investing in increasing the number of woman-owned companies and sole-proprietorships and in developing a regulatory framework to meet the needs of small and medium-sized businesses and sole-proprietorships, which predominate (99.8%) in the Croatian economy.

#### [5.4 Reconciliation between work and family life](#)

In view of the extraordinarily negative demographic trends (ageing and the emigration of the younger population) which the Republic of Croatia has been experiencing lately, one of the priorities in the coming period is the issue of demographic renewal. By the end of this year, a national demographic strategy including a series of measures regulating work-life balance will be prepared and adopted.

#### [5.5 Digital inclusion for women](#)

As previously mentioned, particular attention will be paid to activities aimed at seeking answers to questions on how to increase the inclusion of woman in the ICT and STEM fields, given their long-standing underrepresentation in this sphere. This is also referred to in the answers to question 12.1.

## Section Two: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

### 6. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to advance gender equality in relation to women's role in paid work and employment?

#### 6.1 Strengthened/enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation

*Discrimination in the area of work and working conditions is prohibited by the Labour Act, as well as the Anti-discrimination Act and the Gender Equality Act. These acts prohibit both direct and indirect discrimination in the area of labour and working conditions, including selection criteria and recruitment requirements, promotion, vocational guidance, and vocational and professional training and retraining. The employer is obliged to protect the dignity of workers during their work from acts by superiors, co-workers and persons with whom workers regularly communicate while performing their tasks. The procedures for the protection of workers' dignity are regulated, and the role of the commissioner for the protection of worker's dignity defined.*

The *Labour Act* provides special protection with regard to pay, obliging the employer to ensure equal pay to female and male workers for the same work or for work to which equal value is attributed. The same article precisely defines what is defined as the same work or work to which equal value is attributed. Legal provisions are harmonised with EU legislation.

The Labour Act and other acts also stipulate the prohibition of sexual harassment.

#### 6.2 Introduced/strengthened gender-responsive active labour market policies (e.g. education and training, skills, subsidies)

The Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the '*Strategy for Life-long Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia 2016-2020*' to raise awareness of the need for lifelong learning and investment in the development of career management skills. This is of particular importance for women, as the activities carried out as part of the Strategy may impact on career choices adapted to the needs of the labour market, and on retraining skills during periods of inactivity (while caring for children or the elderly).

Under the *Adult Education Act*, the MSE has introduced a free adult education programme that enables persons aged 15 to 65 to complete primary school education, at the same time qualifying them for simpler jobs for easier employment. In 2018, there were 1,462 participants, and the programme was introduced in all counties and the City of Zagreb, utilising 426,013.51 euros (3,152,500.00 kn) of state budget funds. The participation included an approximately equal share of women and men.

MSE interventions were aimed at balancing supply and demand on the labour market by providing scholarships for students of poorer socioeconomic status. Of the 979 applications received in 2018, 61.4% were submitted by female students. Out of a total of 502 scholarships awarded, 323 or 64.4% were to female students.

The CES has carried out training for unemployed persons to enable them to acquire new skills adjusted to the labour market via adult education institutions, on-the-job training, and through incentives for vocational and professional training for newly employed persons lacking the skills for jobs they have been employed for. The target groups are all unemployed persons lacking the skills required on the labour market. The share of women included in the training increased from 46.98% in 2014 to 53.8% in 2018.

The CES provides individualised support to unemployed persons, and two new activities have been introduced to strengthen the support to long-term unemployed women. Since 2017, upon entering long-term unemployment, motivational counselling has been organised, and since 2018 an activation programme has been carried out. Motivational counselling is a one-hour structured dialogue with a long-term unemployed person, upon which an agreement on inclusion in the labour market is entered into, and the need for inclusion in the activation programme assessed. In the course of 2017 and 2018, 43,185 women were involved in motivational counselling. The programme for the long-term unemployed has been additionally improved by implementing an activation programme for participants to increase their awareness of their own capabilities, detect barriers to their employment, define as realistic a picture of themselves as possible and their employment opportunities, and find ways of overcoming constraints to entering the labour market.

In 2018, 1,081 women or 76% of the total number of persons included in the programme participated in the activation programme. Thanks to this programme, 154 women were employed or included in education.

Please also see the answer to question 9.2 on female entrepreneurship.

## **7. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation?**

### 7.1 Expanded support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care

Care for elderly persons is regulated by the ‘Strategy for Social Care for Elderly Persons in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2017-2020’. Its objectives are improving the legislative framework, informing on and raising the awareness of the rights of elderly persons, providing a better quality of social care for elderly persons, creating a basis for financing NGO projects aimed at service provision for elderly persons, and maintaining institutionalised care models for the active participation of elderly persons in community life.

As part of the programme called ‘Expanding the Network of Social Services in the Community’, by the end of 2016 the MDFYSP had financed 7 projects worth 1,165,388.20 euros (8,623,872.70 kn) to provide services to the elderly and other persons needing care. The same programme also included the beneficiaries’ family members, with the aim of increasing their employment opportunities. Services were provided for a total of 483 persons, of whom 368 were women.

Please also refer to the answers to question 2.4 on project implementation of the ‘Make a Wish’ employment programme for women.



## [7.2 Introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/ parental leave or other types of family leave](#)

See the previous answers to question 2.5.

## [7.3 Conducted campaigns or awareness raising activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work](#)

Several campaigns to encourage fathers to participate more actively in family life and parenting have been conducted in the past few years. It is worth mentioning the ‘Dad Matters, Too’ campaign, carried out in 2017-2019 in Osijek-Baranja County by the NGO called *Dječja osječka kreativna kućica* [Osijek Children’s Creative Little House], with the financial support of the MDFYSP. The activities carried out as part of the campaign included producing a large number of posters, setting up an exhibition of photographs of fathers, launching a programme of support for fathers and their female partners in understanding and practising their parental roles, organising forums and presentations, and studying the views and opinions of children in lower secondary education on the role of the father in the family.

In 2018, the NGOs Status M and *Roditelji u akciji – RODA* [Parents in Action – STORK], in partnership with the Swedish Embassy, organised a ‘Dads’ Festival’. The aim of the project was, as in other countries in which it was organised, to inspire fathers to get actively involved in caring for and bringing up their children. The ‘Dads’ Festival’ was launched with a digital campaign inviting fathers in Croatia to share a photo of themselves with their child in everyday situations on their Facebook profile, with the hashtag *#supertata* (#superdad). As part of the ‘Dads’ Festival’, a round table on engaged parenthood and the active role of fathers in bringing up children was organised in cooperation with the Croatian Parliament Gender Equality Committee. A brochure was made for dads and future dads.

## **8. Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years?**

**YES/NO**

**If YES, have assessments on their impact on women and men, respectively, been conducted?**

In the period covered by this report, the Republic of Croatia was subject to an excess budget deficit procedure, and undertook a series of fiscal consolidation measures on both the revenue and expenditure sides of the budget aimed at decreasing the budget deficit and stimulating economic activity. The impact of austerity measures / fiscal consolidation has not been assessed separately for women/men.

## **9. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?**

### [9.1. Promoted poor women’s access to decent work through active labour](#)

[market policies \(e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.\) and targeted measures](#)

In the Republic of Croatia, the ‘*Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion*’ for 2014-2020 is in force.

The share of women at risk of poverty and social marginalisation in the population aged 25-54 has been decreasing, and in 2014 was 26.1%, while in 2017 it was 21.5%. However, the share of women aged 55+ at risk of poverty and social exclusion has not significantly decreased, having remained at 34.2% since 2017. In 2017, the share of woman at risk of poverty in single-person households was as high as 47.6%, while that of men was 39.5%.<sup>3</sup>

In 2017, the MDFYSP announced a call for proposals to “establish support for social inclusion and the employment of disadvantaged and marginalised groups” and to finance projects providing retraining for unemployed persons belonging to marginalised groups for jobs adjusted to labour market needs, as well as workshops for the development of soft and transversal skills to increase employability. By the end of 2018, a total of 52 projects worth 58,318,188.11 kn had been concluded, involving more than 2,100 unemployed persons. Projects last up to 24 months, after which gender-disaggregated data on beneficiaries will be available.

Special attention is paid to long-term unemployed individuals with impeded access to the labour market by including them in various activation programmes. One of the activation programmes that enables people to acquire simple working skills under protected conditions are public works, the aim of which is to prepare a person for work on the open labour market. The target groups for inclusion in public works are the long-term unemployed, persons with no qualifications, beneficiaries of guaranteed minimum benefits, and elderly persons. The CES implements public works in cooperation with its partners, local authorities and NGOs focusing on specific target groups. During public works, everyone involved receives a minimum wage as remuneration for their work. In the 2014-2018 period, 34,816 unemployed persons were involved in public works, of whom 18,496 or 53.13% were women. A total of 98,936,095.59 euros (732,127,107.45 kn) was spent on public works. The total funds allocated for public works including women were approximately 52.5 million euros.

Please also refer to the answers to question 2.4.

## [9.2 Supported women’s entrepreneurship and business development activities](#)

The CES has provided continuous support to unemployed persons who want to start their own business through counselling, workshops and consultations on writing a business plan to test their business idea and to help prevent them having to close their business early. The CES finances business start-ups through self-employment incentives for anyone who has accomplished all the preparation stages and still wants to start their own business. The CES particularly focuses on women and female entrepreneurship. In the 2014-2018 period, 17,454 business entities (companies or sole-entrepreneurships) were started with the support of the CES, of which 7,421 were started by women. Regarding female entrepreneurship, it should

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<sup>3</sup> Croatian Bureau of Statistics – Poverty and Social Exclusion Indicators

be mentioned that the disaggregated ownership structure of companies in Croatia indicates that 22% of companies are owned by women and 34% of sole entrepreneurs.

In the past fifteen years, female entrepreneurship has been more intensively encouraged. The second '*Strategy for the Development of Female Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Croatia*' was adopted for 2014-2020. It contains measures to increase the involvement of women in business activities, training, financial incentives, etc. Various programmes supporting female entrepreneurship have been carried out. The Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts (MEEC) launched the programme 'Entrepreneurial Impulse', the Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (CBRD) initiated the programme 'Women Entrepreneurs', and the South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEECCEL) started the programmes 'Women Entrepreneurs: A Job Creation Engine for South East Europe' and 'Business Incubator for Women Entrepreneurs'.

When assessing grant applications from small and medium-sized enterprises applying for grants based on calls for proposals, the MGPO awards extra points to SMEs that are majority-owned by women. The number of grants awarded to business enterprises that are majority-owned by women fell from 676 grants and 2.7 million euros in 2014 to 493 grants and 965,810 euros in 2018.

The CBRD grants special and favourable loans with interest subsidies to women entrepreneurs, which has been recognised as an example of good practice.

## **10. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?**

[Introduced or strengthened social protection for unemployed women \(e.g. unemployment benefits, public works programmes, social assistance\)](#)

At the level of the Republic of Croatia, the following social protection programmes have been implemented: job placement and unemployment entitlements, pension schemes, health insurance, family benefits, social welfare, housing benefits, heating benefits, paid sick leave, health protection at work, support to civilian victims disabled during war and members of their families, entitlements for military personnel disabled during war and peace-time and members of their families, and other forms of local-level social protection.

EU statistical data suggest that, although social protection benefits have increased, reaching 21% of GDP annually, they are much lower than the EU 28 average per capita.

The objectives of the '*Social Welfare Development Scheme in the Republic of Croatia for 2011-2016*' were, among other things, associated with social welfare decentralisation, social welfare system computerisation, improving cooperation with NGOs, and empowering local communities in the social planning of services.

All persons whose employment ceased upon termination of a fixed-term employment contract or for various other reasons, and who have not resigned, as well as persons who have closed their business for justified reasons and who have been working for at least 9 months in the past 24 months, are entitled to unemployment benefit. The benefit amount is based on the value of their actual gross salary in the 3 months prior to the termination of their employment, or on the basis of the calculation and payment of compulsory insurance contributions. In the

first three months after termination of employment, benefits are 60% of the average paid gross salary in the previous 3 months, and 30% of the stated amount during the remaining period. The length of an entitlement to benefit depends on the entire length of employment but may not exceed 450 days. An exception applies to persons who have worked for more than 32 years, and who have 5 years until they meet the age limit requirement to acquire the entitlement to a retirement pension. Such persons are entitled to benefits until their employment.

Since in the past 5 years unemployment resulting from termination of employment has been significantly reduced, the number of unemployment benefit recipients has dropped significantly. In 2014, on average, there were 58,347 unemployment benefit recipients, of whom 50.91% were women, while in 2018, on average, unemployment benefits were utilised by 29,795 unemployed persons, of whom 56.65% were women.

With the entry into force of the *Act Amending the Social Welfare Act* in April 2018, personal disability benefit and the assistance and care supplement were increased, improving the material circumstances of persons with disabilities and persons needing the assistance of another person to meet their basic needs. According to statistical data provided by the MDFYSP, as of 31.12.2018, the number of personal disability beneficiaries was 30,620, of whom 47.4% were women, and the number of assistance and care supplement beneficiaries was 71,430, of whom 55.98% were women.

In the first nine months of the implementation of the provisions of this Act increasing the benefit amount, the total amount of budget funds allocated to women assistance and care supplement beneficiaries increased by 386,987.83 euros (2,863,710.00 kn), while the budget funds allocated to women personal disability beneficiaries increased by 658,945.95 euros (4,876,200.00 kn). With the amendments of the Act, the circle of personal disability beneficiaries was extended. At present, persons with severe disabilities or other severe permanent health impairments receiving pay and author's fees are entitled to personal disability benefit. The goal of this legal solution is to encourage the employment of this group of citizens. In the first nine months of the Act being in force, the number of women exercising the right to personal disability benefit increased by 831 beneficiaries.

In 2019, the MDFYSP announced a call for proposals for one-time financial grants to non-governmental organisations for the priority area of the 'improvement and development of social services for social inclusion of socially vulnerable groups'.

For information on public works, please refer to the answer to question 9.1.

## **11 What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?**

[11.1 Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services](#)

[11.2 Undertaken gender-specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns](#)

In the course of 2014 and 2015, the Croatian Institute of Public Health (CIPH), in cooperation with county and City of Zagreb public health institutes, the CBS and Ministry of Health (MoH), conducted the European Health Interview Survey, Wave 2 (EHIS 2). Wave 3 of the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS 3) in Croatia will be conducted in 2019. The

survey findings for 2014-2015 indicated that, for example, a majority of men assessed their health as very good or good, and a majority of women assessed their health as average, bad or very bad. 58.7% of the population stated they had a long-term illness, of whom 61.8% were women, and 55.3% men. In the past 12 months, 17.3% of men and 21.9% of women have been on sick leave. 7.9% of women aged 50 to 65 have never undergone a mammogram screening. 67.6% of men and 64.5% of women aged 50 to 74 have never undergone a faecal occult blood test (FOBT). 21.4% of the population stated that the waiting time for health services was too long, of whom there were more women (23.1%) than men (19.3%).

To improve healthcare quality and availability for women, and with the aim of improving cervical cancer prevention and the early detection system, in April 2016 the first cycle of the implementation of the National Cervical Cancer Early Detection Programme was concluded. The second cycle has not been launched due to programme reorganisation and the need for its improvement in line with the recommendations resulting from the 'Improvement in the Quality of National Cancer Early Detection Programme Implementation' project, carried out from April 2016 to the end of March 2017. Based on pilot project results, it is also intended to implement HPV testing as part of primary screening for women aged 30+.

During this period, a media campaign was launched to raise public awareness of the importance of prevention of malignant (breast, colon and cervical) tumours and encourage preventive screenings.

The National Breast Cancer Early Detection Programme is being implemented on a continuous basis, while the National Colon Cancer Early Detection Programme is being implemented among women and men.

In Croatia, 'day after pills' can be used as emergency contraception upon personal request, or by going to a pharmacy and buying them without a prescription.

The promotion and protection of breastfeeding is among the public health priorities of the Republic of Croatia. The 'Breastfeeding Protection and Promotion Programme' (2015-2016 and 2018-2020) provided for the implementation of various programmes and campaigns, as well as the public health activity called 'Breastfeeding-friendly Community'. Coordination teams for breastfeeding promotion were set up in local self-government units, intensive neonatal treatment units, and in primary healthcare. All Croatian maternity hospitals have the goal of being 'Baby-Friendly Hospitals'. An assessment of the results is not entirely possible, but according to maternity hospital health statistics, about 80% of new-borns are exclusively breastfed, while according to primary healthcare statistics, this is the case for about 60% of babies under 6 months of age. In addition to the need for medical institutions to be better equipped with the specific technical conditions to protect women's health, especially their reproductive health, and to provide access to healthcare facilities for women in remote and rural areas, efforts must be made to provide the legally guaranteed availability of abortion.

## **12. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls?**

[Increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM \(science, technology, engineering and math\)](#)

In the Republic of Croatia, there are no gender-based differences in access to education at any level. As pointed out in the overview of achievements in answer to question 1, young women are opting for higher education in greater numbers than young men. However, although their share in higher education graduates is 60%, the figure in computer science is only 19%.<sup>4</sup> In engineering field of science, in 2017 the proportion of women who obtained master degree or university specialist degree, was 25,7%.

In order to promote a greater gender balance in the choice of individual occupations, debate on the inadequate representation of women in the ICT sector has been started. Every year, Girls in ICT Day is marked by organising workshops for girls, visits to ICT companies, etc. The aim is to reduce the difference in the number of employed women compared to men in the ICT sector, at the same time reducing the problem of insufficient number of ICT experts.

In 2016, a conference on ‘Women in the Digital and Creative Industries’ was organised by the Croatian Employers’ Association (CEA), the eSkills for Jobs initiative and the GEMA project – ‘Managing Access to Gender-balanced Representation’, with the aim of encouraging discussion on the position of women in the digital and creative industries, and promoting creative occupations as a good choice of future career for young girls.

Two significant studies funded by the Croatian Science Foundation should contribute to a better understanding of the interrelationship between interest in STEM areas and other factors, such as the perception of their own competences, family influence, school, and gender roles among Croatian school students.

The first of these studies was carried out by the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences of Zagreb and its partners, and was entitled: ‘JOBSTEM – STEM Career Aspirations during Primary Schooling: A Cohort-sequential Longitudinal Study of Relationships Between Achievement, Self-competence Beliefs, and Career Interests’. The results of the study confirmed previous findings indicating that among various sociodemographic indicators, parents’ education had the greatest impact on children’s academic achievement. Another study was carried out by the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences of Zagreb entitled ‘Social Identities, Higher Education Access and Course Choice’. The results of this 2014 study indicate that of all secondary school students who intended to go on and study, 14% of young women and 55% of young men responded that they would probably or certainly study technical sciences, while 53% of young women and 25% of young men responded that they would probably or certainly study the humanities or social sciences. The student’s motivation to study a course was crucial in course choice, but gender stereotypes and gender roles also played an important role in decision-making. 79% of young women and 85.3% of young men thought that men were more talented at occupations in the field of technical science than women.

In October 2017, a two-year annual EU project was launched called ‘Career ROCKET (Respect, Opportunities, Choice, Knowledge, Equality and Training)’. The aim of the project was to increase the variety of career choices for women and men (girls and boys) during compulsory education and thus contribute to a more equitable and prosperous society. Besides Croatia, the project is being carried out in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece, and the total budget is 535,000.00 euros. The project promoter for Croatia was GTF: the Initiative for Sustainable Growth.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv\\_Eng/publication/2018/SI-1621.pdf](https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2018/SI-1621.pdf)

On 2 May 2019, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the ‘Women in Digital Declaration’ and commissioned the Central State Office for the Development of Digital Society and the OGE to coordinate its implementation. A round table discussion on this topic was held with the aim of introducing the theme of women’s representation in the digital world to the public and encouraging girls to enrol at the relevant faculties. A number of similar round table events are planned to encourage secondary school students to choose ICT studies.

Please also see the answer to question 20.

**13. In the last five years, which forms of violence against women and girls, and in which specific contexts or settings, have you prioritized for action?**

As mentioned earlier, in the past five years, one of the most significant priorities in terms of more quickly improving the position of women and girls has been related to the elimination of all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. Priorities have included combating the trafficking of women and girls, and combating violence against and among youth and women with disabilities. For a more detailed overview, please refer to the answers to questions 2.14, 15.18, 28 and 29.

The MoI has improved the evidence of statistical data on types of violence, which is now recorded according to sex, age, family relationship between the perpetrator and victim, repeat offenders, and persons with disabilities as victims of crimes.

**14. What actions has your country prioritized in the last five years to address violence against women and girls?**

Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation

Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls

Introduced or strengthened measures to increase women’s access to justice (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress and reparations, including for femicide cases)

For answers to these questions, please refer to questions 2 and 15.

Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, housing)

At present, in Croatia there are 19 shelters for women victims of violence, of which eight are autonomous, managed by seven civil society organisations, and one a specialised centre for women victims of sexual violence. NGOs provide services in terms of psychological, social and legal aid, and manage SOS hotlines available to women and children victims of all

forms of violence. Advisory services are also available via social welfare centres, health centres and other institutions.

The MDFYSP has funded the operations of 18 shelters for women victims of violence. Financing is dual in the sense that if the service is contracted as part of the social welfare network, the rates are fixed per capita so that centres/institutions/NGOs providing accommodation for victims of domestic violence are allocated 450 euros per month per beneficiary, while autonomous shelters for women victims of domestic violence are financed through tenders on a three-year term.

The total capacity of shelters financially supported by the MDFYSP is 308 beds. According to available MDFYSP data provided by the shelters, in the period 2014-2017, shelters accommodated 2,767 victims, which is on average 692 victims per year. For this purpose, in the period 2014-2017, the MDFYSP spent 3,328,418.92 euros (24,630,300.00 kn).

The MDFYSP has also been funding civil society organisation projects on preventing and combating various forms of domestic violence. These activities comprise counselling centres for victims of violence, providing services enabling the quality integration of victims of violence after leaving a shelter, and in particular programmes intended for victims of violence that are aimed at gaining skills, qualifications and employment, as well as providing support services in the process of finding adequate housing solutions and intermediation in finding accommodation or housing solutions, on which 595,945.95 euros (4,410,000.00 kn) were spent in the period 2014-2018.

In 2015-2016, a project providing temporary housing and counselling and support services for starting an independent living to 30 women victims of domestic violence was financed from ESF funds, and in 2018 the MDFYSP published a new call for proposals for financing from ESF funds. One of the components of the call was related to providing community services and psychological and sociological support programmes to victims of violence. This component is worth 2,722,972.97 euros (20,150,000.00 kn), and the carrying out of the projects is planned for 2019.

In the Republic of Croatia, a 24-hour service is provided via seven SOS hotlines, of which six are financially supported by the MDFYSP.

To encourage the employment of unemployed victims of domestic violence, CES regional and district offices have continuously been implementing preparation measures and activities for their integration into the labour market through active job search workshops, vocational guidance, assessment of other work and general capabilities, and training activities. Victims of domestic violence have been included in measures co-financing employment or training for better employability. In 2014, 29 victims of domestic violence were included in vocational guidance activities and various community projects. In 2015, their number was 80, and in 2016 there were 65 victims included. 29 victims of domestic violence were included in active labour market policy measures in 2014. In 2015, 49 of them were included, and in 2016 the number was 55. The greatest increase was recorded in their employment. Thus, in 2014, 72 victims of domestic violence found employment, in 2015 108, and in 2016 111.

**15 What strategies has your country used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls?**



### 15.1 Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours

Public awareness of the unacceptability of any form of violence against women has been continuously raised by implementing a series of campaigns and projects, public debates and consultations, studies, round tables, seminars, conferences and many other activities, as detailed in other parts of this report.

All these activities have been carried out by the competent state administration bodies, institutional gender equality mechanisms at the central and local levels, and civil society organisations, and funding for them has been allocated from the state budget, municipal and city budgets, various foundations, and EU funds.

For the purpose of informing the public, and with the aim of additional awareness raising of gender-based violence, the OGE on a regular basis prints and promotes relevant publications and other documents in this field, and distributes them to various stakeholders. Thus, among other things, since 2014, the OGE has published more than 10,000 copies of the *Istanbul Convention*. 8,000 copies of the '*Rules of Procedure in Cases of Sexual Violence*' have been printed, 2,000 copies of the '*Guidelines for Media Reporting on Domestic Violence*', and 1,000 copies of *UN General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating General Recommendation No. 19*, were printed in 2017 and 2018.

Several significant projects are mentioned below as examples of good practice in this area.

The objective of the 'My Voice against Violence' project of the OGE and its partner NGOs, funded by the EC within the framework of the Progress programme, worth 202,680.68 euros, was raising public awareness regarding the unacceptability of all forms of violence against women and girls, and the consistent application of the '*Rules of Procedure in Cases of Sexual Violence*'. The project was implemented in the course of 2014 and 2015, and during this period a public campaign was carried out, with a video and radio advertisement called *Prašina* [Dust] being made and broadcast on national and local radio and TV stations. The coordination of county gender equality commissions on this topic took place, educational workshops were held in schools, and a first international conference on sexual violence took place.

The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality is responsible for the EU project 'Building More Effective Protection: Transforming the System for Combating Violence against Women' (the VAWA project), which is worth 427,782.27 euros. The project is being implemented between April 2017 and November 2019 and deals with the role of the police, judiciary and media in cases of violence against women, with a special focus on cases of femicide. The project is being implemented in cooperation with the NGO *Ženska soba* [Women's Room] – the Centre for Sexual Rights, and the associate partners in the project are the Judicial Academy, Police Academy and Croatian Journalists' Association.

In 2017, at the initiative of the UN special rapporteur for violence against women, based on a decision of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality, a monitoring body called 'Femicide Watch' was formed. Its aim is to monitor the occurrence of murders of women from a gender aspect, and to collect and analyse data to identify key omissions resulting in the murdering of women by their husbands, ex or current partners, and men in general.

The Faculty of Law of the University of Zagreb has been implementing a project called 'CROATIAN VIOLENCE MONITOR (CroViMo) – A Study of the Phenomenology, Aetiology, and Prosecution of Delinquent Violence with a Focus on Protecting Particularly

Vulnerable Groups of Victims’. This five-year project was launched at the beginning of 2018, and is financed by the Croatian Science Foundation to the amount of 173,294.29 euros (1,282,377.80 kn). The project’s objective is to establish a multidisciplinary group of young researchers to conduct innovative studies on violence in Croatia through their ‘Violence Analysis Laboratory’.

The OGE is a partner of the B.a.B.e. NGO in implementing the project ‘How Expertise Leads to the Prevention, Learning, Identification, Networking and Ending of Gender-based Violence’ (HELPLINE) from 2018 to 2020, financed from the REC-RDAP-GBV-AG-2017 programme. The project’s main goal is to support and protect victims of gender-based violence through promoting cross-sectoral cooperation.

State institutions have marked the National Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 22 September and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November on a regular basis.

### 15.2 Work in primary and secondary education, including comprehensive sexuality education

As far as preventive measures are concerned, it should be pointed out that ever since 2010, the MoI, in cooperation with the MSE, primary and secondary schools, and NGOs, has been implementing the project ‘I Live a Life without Violence’, which is aimed at combating domestic violence and violence against women, and introducing measures to prevent violence among young people, inviting the public to report all forms of violence. Within the framework of this project, a documentary film with the same title was produced in 2015, raising public awareness of the need for primary violence prevention. Theatre plays have also been held on the same topic.

A certain number of NGOs have been implementing projects sensitising students to gender-based violence among young people. The NGO CESI (*Centar za edukaciju, savjetovanje i istraživanje* [Centre for Education, Counselling and Research]) has in the last few years successfully implemented the following projects: ‘Play it for Change: Raising Awareness and Empowerment of Girls and Boys for the Prevention of Gender-based Violence through Audio-visual Media and Music’, ‘Love and Respect: Preventing Teen Dating Violence’, ‘Gender Equality Awareness-raising against Intimate Partner Violence – GEAR II’, ‘Detect and React to Violence! Be alarmed!’, ‘Relationship Abuse is of No Use: Prevention of Violence in Intimate Relationships of Young People’.

Lately, the strongly active NGO Status M has, through its projects intended for young people, been making efforts to influence the establishment of tolerance, non-violence and respect, and is particularly aimed at young men.

Every year, the Education and Teacher Training Agency organises a project showcase in which students present extracurricular projects based on the Project Citizen model. The human rights project theme also covers gender equality and personal dignity, and every year several projects are produced related to combating violence against and violence among young people.

A health education curriculum as an interdisciplinary topic, which to a lesser extent includes psychological health and violence prevention does not contain sex education. Health education is conducted as part of homeroom classes, with up to 12 lessons per year. Its implementation depends on the competencies but also affinities and motivation of individual

teachers. As a consequence, students may be deprived of information on issues such as sexuality and reproductive rights.

**16. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?**

Implemented awareness raising initiatives targeting the general public and young women and men in educational settings

The MoI in cooperation with Europol has been implementing the ‘Say No’ prevention campaign, the ‘Who’s Joking with My Data’ project, and ‘Safety and Protection of Children on the Internet’.

Since 2013, the MoI has provided an application for reporting online internet abuse (<https://redbutton.mup.hr>). Records are kept on the basis of reported internet content and victim reports. In the period 2014-2018, there were 2,372 content reports and 134 individual reports made by victims. To protect children and avoid secondary victimisation of children as part of police procedures, 15 rooms in police directorates and 45 rooms in police stations all over the country have been equipped. The rooms are fitted to be visually appealing to children. After a restructuring of the police, a new cybersecurity section has been formed. Criminal investigations of crimes committed using ICT and associated with child protection are carried out in cooperation with police officers for juveniles and police officers for cybercrime or high-tech crime.

The Croatian Regulatory Authority for Network Industries (HAKOM) has set up a special section on its website providing advice on protecting children on the internet and has published several useful publications (*Kako zaštititi dijete u svijetu interneta, mrežnih tehnologija i mobilnih telefona za školsku godinu 2017/2018* [How to Protect Children in the World of the Internet, Network Technologies and Mobile Phones for the School Year 2017-2018], *Priručnik sa savjetima za roditelje* [Parent Advisory Handbook], and also two personal data protection online games). HAKOM has been actively involved and supported the BIK (Better Internet for Kids) campaign through *Sigurniji internet za djecu i mlade* [A Safer Internet for Children and Young People]. The Croatian campaign was awarded first place among 99 participating countries.

The Safer Internet Centre is an NGO financed from ESI funds and the state budget, as well as donations. Its activities involve raising awareness regarding online risks, as well as managing a hotline and helpline. In 2018, on the occasion of Safer Internet Day, which is marked globally, three mobile communications operators (Vipnet, Hrvatski telekom, Tele2), HAKOM, the Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, and the Safer Internet Centre, with the support of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, signed the first Internet Safety Charter.

The *Suradnici u učenju* [Partners in Learning] association promotes the appropriate and meaningful use of education technologies in all spheres of education and the lifelong learning of teachers and educators. Their website is intended for teachers and educators. In the last few

years, the association has organised a series of ‘Safer Internet for Kids’ activities. The association represents Croatia on the Safer Internet Day Committee as part of the INSAFE network. Every year, it organises a multimedia exhibition for which primary and secondary school students and their teachers make posters, animations, video clips, presentations, games, etc. warning their peers of possible dangers on the internet, and providing them with advice on how to avoid them. The best works are published in the digital magazine *Pogled kroz prozor* [A View through the Window]. The association also publishes various content for learning and teaching free of charge on its website. This includes content on appropriate, responsible and safe use of the internet intended for teachers, educators, parents, children and young people. A book for teachers called *Kako poučavati primjerenom, odgovornom i sigurnom korištenju interneta* [How to Teach Appropriate, Responsible and Safe Internet Use] is also available.

## **17. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media?**

### [17.1 Enacted, strengthened and enforced legal reforms to combat discrimination and/or gender bias in the media](#)

#### [17.2 Introduced binding regulation for the media, including for advertising](#)

As stated in our previous reports on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the work of the media in this area is regulated by the *Gender Equality Act*, *Media Act*, *Electronic Media Act*, and *Croatian Radio-Television (HRT) Act*.

Pursuant to the *Electronic Media Act*, the Electronic Media Agency and the Electronic Media Council are responsible for supervising the work of electronic media in terms of gender equality.

The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and HRT for the period from 1 January 2013 until 31 December 2017, and from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2022, in the part related to programmes intended to put into practice equality between men and women, stipulates the following: “HRT shall produce, co-produce and air programmes intended to put into practice equality between men and women.”

#### [17.3 Supported the media industry to develop voluntary codes of conduct](#)

As part of the EU project ‘Building More Effective Protection: Transforming the System for Combating Violence against Women’, the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality published its ‘Analysis of Media Reporting on Violence against Women’ for the period from January 2012 until December 2016, pointing to problematic aspects of reporting on femicide and violence against women, such as sensationalism, secondary victimisation of the victim, focusing on the victim’s personal relationships, and justifying the perpetrator. To enable a systematic and comprehensive approach to violence against women and femicide, the Ombudsperson’s office also conducted an ‘Analysis of Media Reporting on Cases of Femicide’. The goal of the analysis was to highlight the numerous prejudices and stereotypes in the media sending a direct message to the general public on tolerance of violence and transferring the responsibility for violence onto the victim. In cooperation with media workers and judges, a ‘Media Ethics Code: A

Manual for Professional and Sensitised Reporting on Violence Against Women and Femicide’ has been prepared.

The MDFYSP produced ‘A Manual with Guidelines for Media Reporting on Domestic Violence’ in 2007, and a second, revised edition in 2018.

Since 2014, the Electronic Media Agency (the Agency) has been a member of the Mediterranean Network of Regulatory Authorities (MNRA) and the MNRA ‘Declarations on the Promotion of Gender Equality and on the Fight against Gender Stereotyping in the Audio-visual Media’, thus becoming an active member authority of the Women in Media working group operating within this regulatory network.

In 2014 and 2015, the Agency monitored the visibility of women and men in central informative programmes on the three most watched national television channels. The results indicate that, as news presenters and journalists, women are almost equal to men but the share of women in the total number of statements and comments made by women in central informative programmes was less than a third. In the course of 2015, the Agency analysed gender stereotypes in advertising. Gender stereotypes were found in more than half of the advertisements in the analysed sample, of which 80% related to women and 20% to men.

In 2016, the sports news broadcasts in daily informative programmes on the three most watched national television channels were analysed. The analysis showed that coverage of women’s sports and women in sport was less than 4%.

As a result, a campaign “For the better visibility of women’s sports in the electronic media” was launched in 2017 in cooperation with the Croatian Olympic Committee and the OGE, under the auspices of the Central State Office for Sport. As part of the campaign, adverts raising the awareness of the importance of women’s sports were broadcast on 3 national and 23 local television channels, and more than 100 radio stations. The Agency prepared and presented *Recommendations for better monitoring of women’s sports in the electronic media*.

At the end of 2018, the Electronic Media Agency presented its ‘Analysis of Media Treatment of Gender-based Violence in Croatia on Three National Television Channels’. The results have proven that the most influential national TV channels did not treat the problem of violence against women as an isolated incident from the crime pages but in a broader context, as a widespread social problem. The website [www.zeneimediji.hr](http://www.zeneimediji.hr) and a Facebook page *Žene i mediji* [Women and the Media] were created as another step towards raising the awareness of the public and media workers of gender inequality problems in the media. By constantly pointing to the existence of this problem and by including all key stakeholders in activities raising the awareness of the public and media, the Electronic Media Agency and Council have attempted to contribute to achieving equality in the media presentation and visibility of women and men.

#### [17.4 Provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media](#)

In the past few years, the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality has held several workshops on combating stereotypes in the media for journalists and radio and television editors. Several round tables and forums organised by the Electronic Media Agency, the OGE, the Croatian Journalists’ Association and the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality have

contributed to raising gender equality awareness in the media. Public statements, warnings to media companies on the basis of complaints from members of the public, interviews and other forms of public activities of representatives of institutional gender equality mechanisms have continuously contributed to a better education of media experts but also an awareness among the public of the unacceptability of sexist and stereotypical presentations of woman and girls in the media.

[17.5 Established or strengthened consumer protection services to receive and review complaints about media content or gender-based discrimination/bias in the media](#)

Members of the public can submit complaints about the content of media service providers to the Electronic Media Agency via an electronic form if they notice potential irregularities or illegal content in a certain radio or television programme or electronic publication. All formal complaints need to be in writing and contain the name of the publisher, the name of the programme, the date and time of broadcasting, and a description of the irregularity or illegal content.

Within the scope of their authorities, the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality checks complaints by members of the public, including those based on complaints related to the media. As part of these checks, the Ombudsperson obtains reports and documentation on the specific case and takes a stand on any breaches of gender equality principles. In line with their authorities, in the case that a breach of gender equality principles has occurred, the Ombudsperson is authorised to send a warning, proposal and/or recommendation.

**18. Has your country taken any action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?**

On this question, please refer to the answers to questions 3.2, 3.3 and 4.

**19. What actions and measures has your country taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?**

[19.1 Reformed constitution, laws and regulations that promote women's participation in politics, especially at decision-making level, including electoral system reform, adoption of temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets](#)

As stated in our previous report (Peking+20), temporary special measures and the obligation to include a gender quota of a minimum of 40% of representatives of a sex on the electoral lists of political parties and other authorised proposers were introduced under the 2008 *Gender Equality Act*.

[19.2 Provided opportunities for mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking, self-assertion, political campaigning](#)

As part of the Twinning Project carried out with a Finish partner, in 2016 the OGE organised training on gender mainstreaming for representatives of the largest parties. 'Gender

Mainstreaming for Political Decision-makers' was published and distributed to key stakeholders.

Institutional gender equality mechanisms and civil society organisations have for many years worked on empowering women for political participation and their more intensive involvement in political life. In this context, various campaigns, seminars, conferences, training events, public discussions and the like have been organised. Meetings of networks of women active in local and regional politics have been held with the aim of exchanging experience and best practice. In November 2018, a national workshop was held to train Roma women for political involvement.

Most political parties have individual party organisations of women. In the Republic of Croatia, there is an ongoing discussion on ways of increasing the political participation of women, and numerous studies have also been conducted, suggesting that most citizens are aware of the insufficient political engagement of women. Although women in politics are still confronted with various stereotypes, the matter of their political participation has been publicly identified as a political issue.

### [19.3 Collected and analyzed data on women's political participation, including in appointed and elected positions](#)

At the OGE's initiative, based on measures from the *National Gender Equality Policy 2011-2015*, in 2011 the SEC established a gender-statistics recording system for the entire election process, from the candidacy stage to establishing election results in terms of seats won. The CBS has published gender disaggregated data on appointed officials at national and local levels. The websites of state bodies, as well as local and regional self-government units, provide data on all positions to which men and women have been appointed.

## **20. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?**

### [20.1 Strengthened the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training \(TVET\) in media and ICTs for women and girls](#)

Over the years, more and more women have been employed in the information and communications field, and in 2019 the share was 37.4%. The average net pay of women compared to men's pay in this area is 88.5%. The number of women in the telecommunications sector has also increased in the past three years, and now women account for 35.7%, while the largest increase has been recorded in the information service sector, where the share was 40.4% in 2019. Despite the increase in their representation, the fewest women are employed in computer programming, counselling and related activities, where they account for 29.4%

Some of the obstacles to the greater involvement of women in the ICT sector are: strong gender stereotypes and the division into 'female' and 'male' jobs, age, maternity, the myth of the ICT sector being 'too technical' for women, a lack of visible female role models in ICT,

and the lack of a developed network of women mentors. Please also refer to the answers to question 12.

### 20.2 Provided support to women's media networks and organizations

Until 2016, the Ministry of Culture (MoC) provided funding to independent media and their productions, internet portals and platforms. The largest donors in the past few years have been the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, the City of Zagreb, the UZU, the Zaklada Kultura Nova foundation and the Electronic Media Agency's Fund for the Promotion of Pluralism and Diversity of Electronic Media. In this context, several of the most important non-profit media should be pointed out, which have on a regular basis published content on gender, sex, and social issues. These are the portals VoxFeminae.net; H-alter; Kulturpunkt.hr; Libela.org – A Portal on Gender, Sexes and Democracy; Cenzura TV and Cenzura Radio Production; Fade-in – A Fantastically Good Institutional Platform for Young Film and Video Makers; Radio Student; TV Student.

### **21. Do you track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?**

The relevant ministries and other state authorities plan funds to implement programmes and activities aimed at promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia, which can be seen in a gender disaggregated 2014 and 2015 budget analysis to determine the various impacts of the budget on women and men.

In the State Budget, funds allocated for the work of the OGE and Ombudsperson for Gender Equality appear as extra items, and from 2014 to 2018 amounted to 4,817,642.27 euros (35,746,905.67 kn). From 2014 to 2018, a slight increase in state budget funds allocated for gender equality was noticeable. Funds allocated to the OGE increased from 1,802,134.00 kn in 2014 to 2,042,573.67 kn in 2018, which is a 12.8% increase. An exception was 2016, when the OGE's budget was 5,213,140.00 kn due to a share of EU funds. Funds allocated to the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality increased from 2,529,805.00 kn in 2014 to 4,010,920.00 kn in 2018, which is a 37% increase. Exceptions were 2016 and 2017, when due to the share of EU funds the Ombudsperson's budget was 5,112,110.00 kn, and 8,433,688.00 kn, respectively. Other state administration bodies have also invested significant funds in promoting and implementing equality policies, as indicated by this report. However, these funds have not been reported as separate state budget items, as they were financed from the competent authority's regular funds.

### **22. As a donor country, does your country track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?**



As an EU member state, Croatia reports on a regular basis on development cooperation projects carried out in developing countries. Annual Official Development Assistance reports, as well as Gender Action Plan – GAP II reports are produced, and contributions are made to the Joint Report and Compliance of Development Policies. Certain components of the aforementioned reports also relate to gender equality. In 2017, the Republic of Croatia, as an invited member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), for the first time published an Annual Report on Official Development Assistance, which was an important step forward in strengthening the visibility and credibility of the Republic of Croatia as a donor country.

**23. Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality?**

The previous (fourth in a row) *National Policy for Gender Equality* was in force in the period from 2011 to 2015. For procedural reasons, extraordinary parliamentary elections and the reconstruction of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, no National Policy for Gender Equality has been adopted for the most recent period. A new *National Policy for Gender Equality is being prepared for the period from 2019 to 2022*. To prepare it, a working group has been formed with the OGE, composed of representatives of the relevant state authorities, commissions for gender equality, NGOs and independent women experts. The new draft of this document has been harmonised with the following priority areas: 1 promoting the human rights of women and gender equality; 2 equal opportunities on the labour market; 3 gender-sensitive education and combating stereotypes; 4 equality in the decision-making process in political and public life; 5 eliminating violence against women; 6 international politics and cooperation; 7 empowerment of institutional mechanisms and implementation methods. After public consultation, it is expected that the policy will be adopted in the course of this year.

**24 Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women?**

*The fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Republic of Croatia pursuant to Article 18 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women for the periods 2005 to 2010-2015* was presented at the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the Committee) in Geneva in July 2015. In the same year, the OGE submitted its Concluding Observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Croatia and recommendations inviting the Republic of Croatia to undertake further measures to promote the position of women, translated into Croatian, to the responsible state authorities, with implementation timeframes stated. Upon the Committee's request, the Republic of Croatia submitted answers to the individual recommendations within two years in October 2017. As a state party, the Republic of Croatia has been invited to submit its regular

sixth periodic report in July 2019. For this reason, a working group was formed with the OGE to prepare the aforementioned report. The group is composed of representatives of the relevant state administration bodies pursuant to the articles of the Convention and the individual paragraphs of the Concluding Observations. The preparation of the sixth periodic report is in progress.

The Republic of Croatia has submitted its responses to the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council related to its reports as part of the UPR First and Second Cycles (in 2015) under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism. Upon taking on the voluntary commitment to present a national interim report between the two UPR cycles, with the aim of presenting the implementation of the recommendations from 2015, the MFEA organised a coordination meeting in July 2018. The second national interim report covers the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018. After the observations on the Interim Report by the competent authorities, it was submitted to the Croatian Parliamentary Committee on Human and National Minority Rights, which at its session in January 2019 held an interactive discussion with Committee members, including the MFEA (which had been responsible for the report's preparation).

## **25. Is there a national human rights institution in your country?**

The Ombudsperson of the Republic of Croatia, as a central and independent body for combating all forms of discrimination, is responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights and freedoms, and also operates as the national preventive mechanism for the protection of persons deprived of their liberty. The institution of the Ombudsperson was introduced into the Croatian political and legal system by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia in the year 1990. Since then, constitutional provisions regulating the status of this institution have changed, expanding the mandates of the Ombudsperson and strengthening its role. The coming into force of the Anti-discrimination Act significantly extended the mandates of the institution, establishing it as the central equality body in the Republic of Croatia. The Ombudsperson of the Republic of Croatia, as well as the other three Ombudspersons, is appointed and discharged by the Croatian Parliament, and their term of office is eight years.

The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality was introduced as an institution by the 2003 Gender Equality Act. The new Gender Equality Act of 2008 stipulates that the "Ombudsman/woman for gender equality shall perform the tasks of an independent body in charge of combating discrimination in the field of gender equality." For more detailed information on the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality's term of office, please refer to the answers to question 32.

## **26. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?**

### 26.1 Adopted and/or implemented a National Action Plan on women, peace and security

In July 2011, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the first ‘*National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, and Related Resolutions (2011 to 2014)*’ (NAP I). NAP I contained objectives and concrete measures to implement a programme for women, peace and security in the key areas of prevention, participation, protection and post-conflict recovery, and to monitor its implementation. NAP I enabled the structured implementation of a programme for women, peace and security. It contained measures for integrating a gender perspective into security, defence and foreign policies, as well as into the practice of institutions and bodies implementing these policies. The MoD, MoI and MFEA’s gender mainstreaming capacities were also strengthened through various training events on all the elements of the programme for women, peace and security, such as the inclusion of women in decision-making and peace processes, training on gender equality in building and preserving peace, and the comprehensive protection of women during and after conflicts. Since 2013, the MoD and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (AFRC) have implemented ‘Gender Mainstreaming’, a strategy paper providing guidelines for establishing gender equality and eliminating all forms of gender discrimination in the defence sector.

The new ‘*National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and Related Resolutions (2019 to 2023)*’ is about to be adopted. Compared to the previous NAP, it contains a new chapter called ‘Security Risk Management’, which introduces two new objectives: “1) a gender-sensitive approach to the management of security risks from natural and technological disasters and terrorism; 2) promoting the protection of the rights of women and girl refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, with concrete measures for their realisation.”

#### [26.2 Integrated women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks](#)

Based on the on the *International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Act*, the Croatian Parliament adopted the ‘*National Strategy for Development Cooperation for the Period 2017-2021*’. Establishing a national policy for international development cooperation and humanitarian aid is one of the key components and important instruments of foreign policy. The sector priorities include the protection and empowerment of women, children and youth under Agenda 2030 – Sustainable Development Goal 5.

In foreign policy activities within the framework of international organisations (UN, EU, NATO, OSCE, CoE), other multilateral formats, and in bilateral contacts, the diplomatic representatives of the Republic of Croatia have for years been systematically and actively promoting the programme for women, peace and security, with a special focus on the empowerment of women and girls, and on combating sexual violence in conflicts.

According to the ‘*Defence Report 2018*’ submitted by the MoD to the Croatian Parliament, the share of woman in managing and commanding duties in the Ministry of Defence and the Croatian Army in 2018 was 10.35%. 36.70% of women were deployed in managing posts in the Ministry of Defence, while 8.58% of women were in commanding posts in the Croatian Army. In 2018, 12.15% of women were promoted.

**27. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?**

27.1 Promoted and supported women's meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements

As a symbol of support to the participation of women in peacekeeping missions and operations, the MFEA took on the commitment to finance and organise training for third-country women police officers dispatched to UN peacekeeping missions. A two-week 'United Nations Police Officers Course' (UNPOC) has been carried out once a year since 2015 in cooperation with the MoD and MoI at the International Military Operations Training Centre of the MoD. So far, it has been completed by 45 female participants from all over the world.

The UNPOC pre-deployment training course was organised to prepare 14 police officers from 7 African and Asian countries to be dispatched to international peacekeeping operations. A project worth 27,027.02 euros (200,000.00 kn) was implemented between 2015-2018, and included the MFEA, MoD, MoI and UNPOC.

The MFEA supported the formation of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, initiated in 2017 by Italy in the course of its membership of the UN Security Council. The Network's goal is to contribute to peaceful conflict resolution in the Mediterranean by including women in peacekeeping processes in all aspects and at all levels.

In 2018, the Voluntary Compact on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse was signed between the United Nations Secretary-General and the Government of the Republic of Croatia. Voluntary Compact signatories affirm their commitment to prevent all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse by members of peacekeeping missions and, together with UN Secretary-General, pledge to take all possible measures to ensure support and assistance to victims, and to maintain efforts to combat sexual exploitation and abuse.

According to data provided by the MoD, the share of women deployed in peacekeeping operations and missions in 2018 was 5.11%.

27.2 Promoted equal participation of women in humanitarian and crisis response activities at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level

As part of international development cooperation, in 2016 the MFEA completed the implementation of special projects in Afghanistan aimed at supporting women and girls in the spheres of health, education and small business. Funds allocated to female entrepreneurship projects amounted to 13,513.51 euros (100,000.00 kn). As part of the support for the implementation of the 'Small Projects – Big Impact' initiative, the project implementation partner was a local NGO for the empowerment of women called the 'Social Services for Young Women and Children Organization' (SSYWCO).

Funds for a project to construct a Midwifery Training Centre in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan, amounted to approximately 298,130.16 euros (2,206,163.20 kn), and the project

was implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Afghanistan and the Regional Healthcare Administration in Mazar-e-Sharif.

The MFEA has also supported many other projects. For example, a project for women and sustainable development was implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A study on the status of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, their influence on community life and inclusion in the labour market was carried out. Women were made familiar with the concept of social entrepreneurship, they gained insight into the experiences of Croatian social entrepreneurship, and were given recommendations on the efficient management of such businesses/cooperatives. Funding for the project amounted to 33,781.83 euros (249,985.60 kn).

In Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (now North Macedonia) a project was implemented with the aim of empowering the role of women in the field of combating gender-based violence, discrimination and the post-conflict transition to democracy. 10 organisations participated in the project, workshops were held and an analysis of 18 organisations was made. A 'Handbook for Those Working with Women Survivors of Violence' was prepared and distributed to all women's organisations. A direct result of this project was the opening of a counselling service for women victims of violence and free legal aid for victims of violence. The funding allocated to this project was 33,783.78 euros (250,000.00 kn).

In 2013, the 'Capacity Building for HIV/AIDS Epidemic Monitoring and Control in Developing Countries' project worth 50,540.54 euros (374,000.00 kn) was implemented in Morocco. Support was granted for the HIV/AIDS National Programme of the Kingdom of Morocco for the purpose of completing the protocol on gonorrhoea resistance surveillance in seasonal women workers in the Souss-Massa-Drâa region and of preparing a protocol for assessing gonococcal resistance to antibiotics. A two-day working meeting on the protocol was held in Rabat with the representatives of the National HIV Programme (Ministry of Health), the National Institute of Hygiene, UNAIDS and WHO.

In addition, scholarships worth 25,405 euros (188,000.00 kn) for 2013 and 3,378.38 euros (25,000.00 kn) for 2014 were granted to primary school girls from rural areas in Morocco. Support was provided for the programme of the Morocco civil society organisation *Comité de Soutien à la Scolarisation des Filles Rurales – CSFF* [Rural Girls School Support Committee] to implement the scholarship programme *Une bourse pour réussir* [A Scholarship to Succeed] for the education of 1,000 rural girls in primary schools. A partnership agreement was signed on providing support for an education project for 20 girls from rural areas of Morocco called 'A Scholarship to Succeed'.

The purpose of the project intended for women in the democratic transition society in Myanmar carried out in the period 2013-2015 was to strengthen the role of women and their empowerment in the process of establishing peace and democracy in Myanmar. Within the framework of this project, 20 trainers were trained to train 250-300 local women activists. The funding allocated for this project from the Budget of the Republic of Croatia was 81,081.08 euros (600,000.00 kn) for a three-year period. The implementation partner was a Myanmar local NGO called Educational Initiatives, and the project was co-financed jointly with the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Through the project of providing aid to Syrian refugees in Jordan, Croatia has provided assistance to Syria and neighbouring countries worth a total of 1,000,000.00 euros over the five-year period 2016-2020 in the areas of peace, education, health, protection of women and

children, and sustainable economic development.

**28. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?**

28.1 Implemented legal and policy reform to redress and prevent violations of the rights of women and girls

Since 2016, the *Act on the Rights of Victims of Sexual Violence During the Armed Aggression Against the Republic of Croatia in the Homeland War* has been in force. Until its adoption, indemnification of victims of war crimes was associated only with implementing criminal proceedings against the perpetrator. As a result, a great number of victims of sexual violence were left without any satisfaction, which caused additional trauma for the victims and had a demotivating effect on them with respect to reporting crimes. The Act defines the concept of victims of sexual violence in the Croatian Homeland War, and in the process of the exercising of rights, principles of gender equality are applied without discrimination towards the parties on any grounds. Pursuant to this Act, a victim of sexual violence who has been granted such status by the Croatian Ministry of Veterans' Affairs may exercise their right to psychosocial, legal and medical assistance, medical rehabilitation, systematic medical examinations, compulsory and supplementary health insurance, accommodation in an institution providing support and services to war veterans, victims and other persons, as well as monetary compensation.

Under the provisions of the Act, a victim may exercise all their rights even if the perpetrator of the sexual violence is unknown. A victim of sexual violence may exercise the right to one-time monetary compensation or to monthly monetary compensation of 73% of the calculation basis laid down by the law governing the execution of the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia.

A Commission for Forming an Opinion on Sexual Violence Suffered in the Homeland War was formed as an independent expert and advisory body. The Commission has collected information about victims, sexual violence and perpetrators, and heard the parties involved. Where necessary, examiners take care to prevent secondary victimisation. As at 31 December 2018, a total of 248 applications had been submitted, and 233 resolved. As at 31 December 2018, 3,055,851.77 euros (22,613,303.11 kn) had been spent on rights pursuant to the Act.

The *National Programme of Psychosocial and Medical Assistance to Participants and Victims of the Homeland War* also relates to participants and victims of World War II, as well as to returned foreign fighters, and was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in January 2014. Of the total number of beneficiaries during the course of the programme, approximately 7.76% of women have asked for psychosocial assistance, including women with the status of Croatian Homeland War veterans, the wives of military personnel disabled during the Croatian Homeland War, wives of Croatian veterans, wives of killed and missing Croatian

veterans, and women victims of sexual violence committed during the armed aggression against the Republic of Croatia in the Croatian Homeland War.

The preventive systematic medical examination programme which has been continuously implemented since 2016 has enabled an increase in the overall quality of life of Croatian male and female veterans of the Croatian Homeland War and their family members, and a decline in the morbidity and mortality rates of Croatian male and female veterans. The psychosocial and medical care programme continues to be implemented at the national level to respond to the needs of beneficiaries, and in the 2016-2018 period 3.4 million euros (25.5 million kn) was spent on this purpose.

Since the war and aggression, which also involved rape and other forms of sexual violence, are still fresh in the memory of the Republic of Croatia, it has joined the United Kingdom's Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative, focusing in particular on global activities to combat these crimes, help victims, and to punish and stigmatise perpetrators.

### 28.2 Taken measures to combat trafficking in women and children

The new *National Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for the Period 2018-2021* has created the normative framework to enable the prosecution and sanctioning of perpetrators of the criminal offence of trafficking in human beings, and provide assistance and protection to victims of trafficking. It should contribute to improving the existing system of combating trafficking in human beings and provide an adequate response to new trends in this area.

The OHRRNM, in cooperation with the MoI, keeps a database of identified victims of trafficking in human beings.

Special attention is paid to further strengthening cooperation in criminal proceedings in cases of trafficking in human beings between the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia (DORH) and the MoI, improving methods of identification of victims of trafficking in human beings, and acting in the best interests of victims of trafficking. In the implementation of the National Plan, the *Penal Code* is applied.

The OHRRNM coordinates the work of ministries, civil society organisations and other bodies taking part in the system of combating trafficking in human beings within the framework of the National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and its Operative Team. The OHRRNM annually reports to the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the implementation of the *National Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings*, and its Head acts as the national anti-trafficking coordinator and a member of the network of European national coordinators, as well as the network of coordinators of South-Eastern Europe.

The new *Protocol on the Integration/Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings* was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in February 2019. The Protocol complies with the principles of a humane and legal approach, providing initial forms of assistance and protection to newly identified victims of trafficking, temporary accommodation in reception centres, legal, psychological, medicinal and other aid and protection, and safe accommodation and return. Representatives of state administration bodies, with the Croatian Red Cross and civil society organisations as partners, are involved in the process of identification and the system of providing assistance and protection to victims of

trafficking. The aim of the Protocol is to determine responsibilities and procedures in the course of identification, and the procedures to provide assistance and protection to victims of trafficking. The strategy applied in doing so is gender-sensitive, taking into consideration the interests of children.

In addition to the aforementioned Protocol, the general treatment of victims is also regulated by the *'Protocol on Identification, Assistance and Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking'*, the *'Protocol on Procedures during the Voluntary and Safe Return of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings'*, and by the *Standard Operating Procedures* of the ministry responsible for social welfare affairs and the ministry in charge of exercising healthcare system rights, as well as the *'Questionnaire and Observations for Early Identification of Asylum Seekers Having Suffered Traumatic Experiences'*, under the jurisdiction of the MoI.

The MoI annually organises a large number of courses and seminars on trafficking in human beings for the professional and additional training of police officers.

In recent years, most identified victims have been nationals of the Republic of Croatia subjected to sexual or labour exploitation within the boundaries of the Republic of Croatia (so-called internal trafficking). Trends in the Republic of Croatia correspond with global trends. Victims are mostly women or girls who are being sexually exploited, although an increase in the number of men victims of trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation is also evident. In the period 2014-2018, 210 victims of trafficking in human beings were recorded: 125 women and 85 men. Of the 125 identified women victims of trafficking, 51 were minors.

The social welfare system is an integral part of the national mechanism for combating trafficking in human beings, and operates at national and county levels. Apart from representatives on the National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the social welfare system also has a representative coordinator in the National Committee Operative Team who is on call 24 hours a day to coordinate activities in the social welfare system in each individual case of victims of trafficking in human beings who are minors. At the county level, county anti-trafficking coordinators have been appointed in social welfare centres and are responsible for counselling and assisting victims of trafficking. As part of the social welfare system, there are also two shelters for trafficked persons, one of which is intended for adult victims of trafficking, while the other accommodates victims of trafficking in human beings who are minors. Shelters are managed by non-governmental organisations specialised in combating trafficking in human beings, and are financed from the social welfare system. The MDFYSP provides safe housing, psychosocial assistance and care, and legal aid and protection. The treatment of victims of trafficking is governed by Standard Operating Procedures, which are available on the MDFYSP's website. For each victim of trafficking, an individual programme of assistance and support during the social reintegration process is prepared, based on a comprehensive assessment of needs, difficulties and resources, in agreement with the victim of trafficking / custodian, shelter, non-governmental organisations.

In all CES regional offices, a total of 22 special women counsellor-coordinators for victims of domestic violence, victims of trafficking and victims of sexual violence in war have been appointed. The women coordinators are contact persons to whom other institutions may refer victims of domestic violence, victims of trafficking and victims of sexual violence in war. In their work, coordinators apply the principles of confidentiality and the protection of the personal data of the victims of violence, and work on preparing them for employment through empowerment of their work potential and an increase in their competences.



Up to the end of 2018, the Demand for Sexual Exploitation in Europe (DESIRE) project was conducted jointly by the University of Vrije (Brussels), University of Tilburg, University of Warsaw, University of Uppsala and the LET organisation of Zagreb, and was financed from European Commission funds. The aim of the project was to contribute to preventing trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation through defining ways of achieving reduced demand.

## **29. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child?**

### 29.1 Tackled disadvantages in health outcomes due to malnutrition, early childbearing (e.g. anemia) and exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases

The CIPH regularly publishes numerous surveys and manages gender-sensitive statistical data on the health of girls and girl children. Based on a study of the mental health of children and adolescents, the ‘Guidelines for Services for the Mental Health Protection of Young People’ were drawn up. Over the course of many years, mental disorders have had a 6-7% share in hospital morbidity based on the number of hospitalisations, while based on the length of hospital stay it is the leading group. Data on the hospitalisation of young people due to mental disorders indicates that the number of 10 to 19-year-old hospitalised females is somewhat higher than the number of hospitalised male adolescents. After this age, the share of men among hospitalised persons is much larger than that of women.

The most recent study of health behaviour among young people in Croatia, from 2018, a study regularly carried out as part of the international study ‘Health Behaviour in School-aged Children’ (HBSC), indicates a slight improvement in the habits of young people, particularly girls, who drink and smoke less compared to 2010 and 2014. The trend of reduced smoking in young people is a consequence of the efficient implementation of numerous regulatory measures prohibiting tobacco sales to minors, an increase in the price of tobacco products, and ensuring a smoke-free environment.

The reproductive health of young people is an important factor in the protection of women’s health. According to the statistical data of the CIPH for 2017, almost 1,000 female adolescents aged under 20 gave birth, which is around 3% of the total number of births in the observed year. The number of girls under 20 undergoing abortion upon request was 157 (6.5% of the total number of induced abortions).

In order to eliminate and reduce the amount of sexually risky behaviour (sexual intercourse at an early age, multiple sexual partners, and unprotected sex) and the related negative health consequences, including HIV/AIDS, the CIPH’s Department for the Promotion of Responsible Sexual Behaviour is in charge of informing, educating and counselling with regard to adopting positive health-related decision-making skills, behaviours and lifestyles, including protective behaviours and measures that reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and unwanted pregnancies. Within the Department, there is an HIV / Sexual Health Counselling and HIV Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre, staffed by a team of experts providing individual, free and anonymous counselling and HIV testing services to patients (testing for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and syphilis is also possible), counselling on

sexually transmitted diseases (infections), distribution of educational materials (brochures and leaflets) and condoms, as well as helping with referrals for treatment and support.

In 2015, free immunisation against the Human Papilloma Virus was introduced for female upper middle school and high school students, while the CIPH, in cooperation with NGOs, organised several workshops on sexual health and responsible sexual behaviour for primary and secondary school female students.

The health literacy of school staff is a long-term objective in the field of promoting students' health. Since 2017, the Schools for Health in Europe (SHE) project has been carried out, with nine secondary schools joining the European Network of Health-promoting Schools. Promoting health in schools includes the health education taught in the classroom but also includes efforts at creating a healthy school environment, school policy, and the curriculum. Promoting health in the school environment involves the approach of the entire school. In cooperation with the Education and Teacher Training Agency and the CIPH, professional training for teachers is organised and coordinated in schools. A platform for the Croatian Network of Health-promoting Secondary Schools has been created, and contains a lot of useful information.

As part of the 'Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived' (FEAD), projects have been financed to provide help in the form of food and basic material assistance to the most deprived social groups. By the end of 2018, projects worth 29.5 million euros (218,317,326.21 kn) had been contracted, while at the level of the entire Fund, help in the form of food or basic material help had been provided for 347,918 persons, including 174,936 women, among whom there were 54,717 girls under 15. To combat child poverty, a special measure to fund free school meals for children at risk of poverty is being implemented. By the end of 2018, free school meals had been provided for 40,269 primary school children, of whom 20,157 were girls.

#### [29.2 Implemented policies and programmes to eliminate violence against girls, including physical and sexual violence and harmful practices](#)

The Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted its '*National Strategy for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2014-2020*'. Its goal is to achieve the more efficient promotion and protection of the rights of children through the implementation of international and national standards. One of four strategic goals is the elimination of all forms of violence against children. Presently, data are being collected for the preparation of the 'Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2014-2020' for the years 2019 and 2020.

In 2018, the Ministry of Finance prepared a Methodological Handbook for Creating a Children's Budget in order to simplify the preparation of annual reports on the execution of the children's budget for budget beneficiaries, taking into account the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realisation of children's rights. The MDFYSP is responsible for consolidating the preparation of the children's budget and an annual report on its execution.

In April 2017, in cooperation with UNICEF's Office for Croatia, a public presentation of the document 'Children's Well-being Indicators', based on which the status and needs of

children are assessed, was held. In 2017, the *Act Ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure* was passed.

In the period from 2014 to 2018, the MDFYSP announced five calls for proposals from NGOs in the field of prevention of violence against and among children and young people, covering the areas of prevention of violence among young people and children (non-violent conflict resolution, education on acceptance of differences, etc.), prevention of violence in partnership relations among young people, prevention of electronic violence against and among children and young people, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of children, and prevention of emotional violence against children and of physical punishment of children. A total of 2,481,756.75 euros (18,365,000.00 kn) was spent on implementing 168 NGO projects in the given period.

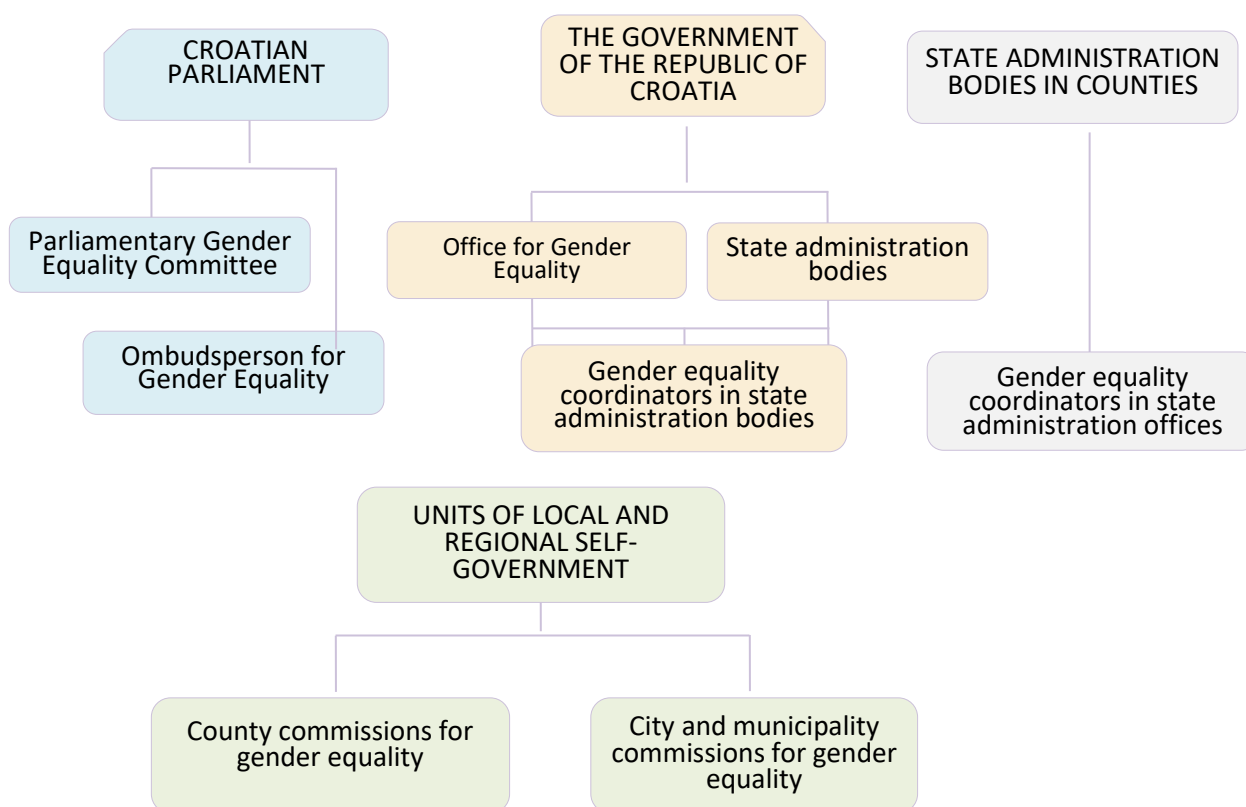
The *Penal Code* regulates adverse harmful practices and foresees punishments for female genital mutilation, as well as for assisting and encouraging it.

Since 2003, Croatia has a specialised Ombudsperson for Children.

## Section three: National institutions and processes

32. What is your country's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women? Please name it and describe its location within Government.

INSTITUTIONAL SETTING for Gender Mainstreaming in the Republic of Croatia



Government of the Republic of Croatia – Office for Gender Equality – [www.uredi-ravnopravnost.hr](http://www.uredi-ravnopravnost.hr)

The national machinery for gender equality is defined by the Gender Equality Act and the Standing Orders of the Croatian Parliament.

The Croatian Parliament Gender Equality Committee was formed in 2002. The Committee has the rights and duties of a competent working body in matters pertaining to promoting and monitoring the application of the principle of gender equality in the legislation of the Republic of Croatia. In particular, the Committee:

- promotes the signing of international documents on gender equality and monitors the application of these documents;
- participates in the drafting, implementation and analysis of the implementation of the National Gender Equality Policy in the Republic of Croatia;
- cooperates and establishes measures and activities to improve the right to gender equality;
- proposes packages of measures to eliminate discrimination between the sexes;
- promotes equal gender representation in the composition of the working bodies and delegations of the Parliament;
- prepares draft legislation and other regulations on gender equality;

- mainstreams gender equality in education, healthcare, public information, social policy, employment, free enterprise, decision-making processes, family relations, etc.

The institution of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality was introduced by the *Gender Equality Act* in 2003 as an independent body in charge of combating discrimination in the field of gender equality. The Croatian Parliament appoints the Ombudsperson for a period of eight years and debates the report on their activities, which is submitted by the Ombudsperson once a year.

The Ombudsperson acts independently and individually, and monitors the enforcement of the *Gender Equality Act* and other regulations on gender equality. The Ombudsperson investigates cases of infringement of the principle of gender equality and cases of discrimination against individuals or groups of individuals by public bodies, units of local or regional self-government or other bodies with public authority, employees of such bodies or other legal or natural persons. In discharging the duties within their remit, the Ombudsperson is authorised to admonish and to submit proposals or recommendations. The bodies referred to above inform the Ombudsperson in writing of the measures and actions taken as a result of any admonishments, proposals or recommendations received no later than thirty days of the date of their receipt.

In the case of a failure to submit a report or to provide the required information within the stipulated period, the Ombudsperson may request that an inspection be carried out by the appropriate inspection authority responsible for the body's activities. In cases of infringements of the provisions of the *Gender Equality Act* that constitute a criminal offence, the Ombudsperson reports the case to the competent State Attorney's Office.

The Ombudsperson is authorised to file a motion for judicial review of the constitutionality of a law or the constitutionality and legality of other regulations

The Office for Gender Equality is a technical support service of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and was also established pursuant to the 2003 *Gender Equality Act*. The Office performs technical and other tasks by: coordinating all activities aimed at ensuring gender equality; approving the action plans of public administration bodies and legal persons that are majority-owned by the state; submitting proposals to the Government of the Republic of Croatia and to other bodies for the adoption or amendment of laws and other regulations, and the adoption of other measures; developing a national policy for the promotion of gender equality and monitoring its implementation; conducting surveys; developing analyses; monitoring the compliance and implementation of laws and other regulations on gender equality in relation to international instruments; developing national reports on compliance with international obligations in the field of gender equality; cooperating with non-governmental organisations operating in the field of gender equality and partially providing funds for their projects or activities; promoting information on, and awareness of, gender equality; forwarding petitions from parties on infringements of the *Gender Equality Act* and other regulations to the Ombudsperson and other competent authorities; coordinating the activity of county commissions for gender equality. It reports on its activities to the Government of the Republic of Croatia at least once a year.

Along with the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality and the OGE, gender equality coordinators in ministries and other state administration bodies are also responsible for enforcing the *Gender Equality Act*. They are obliged to submit to the OGE reports on national

policy implementation and to participate in the preparation and monitoring of action plans for establishing and promoting gender equality pursuant to their remit and the scope of their activities. Their rights and obligations are laid down in the bodies' action plans.

Commissions for gender equality are responsible for enforcing the Gender Equality Act at the local level. They are active in all 20 counties and the City of Zagreb, and also in approximately 90 municipalities and cities. County commissions for gender equality are the working and consultative bodies of county assemblies composed of members of the county assemblies and members representing interested citizens.

As an important institutional mechanism for establishing equality between women and men in local life, commissions for gender equality provide expert assistance to county assemblies in enforcing the GEA, the '*National Policy for Gender Equality*' and the *European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life*, and are also responsible for encouraging the establishment of city and municipal commissions for gender equality. Their activities are financed by counties, cities and municipalities.

In the 20 state administration bodies in the counties, gender equality coordinators are appointed who are also members of county commissions for gender equality.

In terms of empowerment, capacitating and networking national institutional mechanisms, in 2017 training was organised for 120 members of commissions for gender equality in Zagreb, Vukovar, Rijeka and Zadar, and for 44 gender equality coordinators from state administration bodies. As part of the 'Support to Gender Equality' twinning project, the OGE trained more than 160 people who are members of county commissions for gender equality or coordinators in state administration bodies.

**33. Is the head of the national machinery a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation (e.g. inter-ministerial coordinating office, commission or committees)?**

The head of the OGE is a member of the National Council for Sustainable Development, established by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in 2018 and presided over by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia. The Council's professional and administrative tasks are carried out by the MFEA. The Council's main task is to propose the measures and activities, priorities, payers, dynamics and funds necessary to implement Agenda 2030 goals, and to monitor, analyse and coordinate their implementation. In addition to the Prime Minister, members of the National Council for Sustainable Development include all ministers, a representative of the Cabinet of the President of the Republic of Croatia, the heads of the Government's Offices for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, Cooperation with NGOs, and for Gender Equality, as well as the Croatian Bureau of Statistics. As necessary, upon being invited by the Council's President, representatives of other competent authorities and institutions, as well as experts from other relevant areas, may attend the Council's sessions.

**34. Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

Based on the Decision on Establishing the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD), cooperation with other sustainable development stakeholders in the Republic of Croatia is provided for, meaning that the heads of the NCSD include certain stakeholders involved in the process of implementing Agenda 2030. How these other stakeholders will be involved in the established national coordination mechanisms to contribute to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development will depend on individual NCSD members.

Pursuant to Article 84 of Agenda 2030, UN member states decided that the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) will carry out regular reviews of achievements in implementing Sustainable Development Goals based on National Voluntary Reviews. The purpose of national contributions is to exchange experiences, achievements, challenges and lessons learned, with the aim of accelerating the implementation of Agenda 2030. At the HLPF in July 2019, the Republic of Croatia, along with 46 other countries, of which 10 are from Europe, will present its first National Voluntary Review on the realisation of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which will be based on three dimensions – economic, social and environmental, with a focus on the implementation of SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17. The MRDEUF coordinates the process of preparing the National Voluntary Review of achievements in implementing Sustainable Development Goals.

#### [Input of stakeholders in preparing this National Report](#)

The OGE set up a working group for the preparation of the Peking+25 National Report which involved representatives of the ministries and other responsible bodies. They were instructed on how to prepare the report and asked to submit their contributions in line with their responsibilities. With the aim of collecting data from civil society and academia, representatives of civil society organisations and the academic community were invited to a separate meeting and also submitted their contributions to the preparation of the report. All the contributions were analysed, and the OGE included the information provided in the Draft National Report, which was then sent to the responsible authorities for observations. Comments, proposals and suggestions were included in the final version of the Peking+25 Report.

### **35. Is gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation?**

The '*National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030*', which is undergoing adoption procedure by the Government of the Republic of Croatia, contains a national list of indicators, including global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. The Indicator List includes gender equality as a priority. Basic statistical indicators related to monitoring progress from the perspective of the position of women and men, and girls and boys, refer to their participation in education, the monitoring of the ICT skills of young people, teachers, the pay gap, the pay gap by occupation, the inactive population associated with care for household members, etc.

## Section Four: Data and statistics

### 36. What are the top three areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?

#### 36.1 Conduct of new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)

The CBS has continuously made efforts to improve the statistics system by expanding existing surveys and introducing new ones into the statistics system of the Republic of Croatia to respond to the growing need for statistical data. In 2017, a preliminary time-use survey was conducted, which provided detailed information on the structure of activities in which respondents were involved according to different categories of respondent and the households they lived in. The preliminary survey created the requirements for conducting a full survey on a nationally representative sample, to be conducted in 2022, after which the data will be made public.

In 2016, for the first time, an adult education survey was conducted as a regular statistical survey to be conducted over six-year periods. The survey enabled the collecting of data on education (formal and informal), the structure of the households the respondents lived in, demographic characteristics, obtained degrees vs. uncompleted education, access to information and learning capabilities, difficulties in participation in education and training, and on foreign language skills. The survey provides data from which it is possible to draw various conclusions on gender differences in terms of the respondents' quality of education, readiness and opportunities for education, and life-long learning.<sup>5</sup>

In the course of 2019, the CBS will carry out a preliminary gender-based violence survey within the framework of the 'EU Survey on Gender-based Violence against Women and Men'. In this survey, data are collected on the prevalence rates of victimisation of respondents in terms of predetermined forms of violence, the existence of a mutual relationship between respondent and perpetrator at the moment of victimisation, the reactions of the system of protection of victims of violence, the violence respondents witnessed in childhood, etc. Data obtained in this survey enable a comprehensive overview of actually experienced violence which is independent of official administrative data, as well as its gender-based motivation, the circumstances of the committed violence, an assessment of the 'dark numbers of crime', etc. By carrying out the preliminary survey, the requirements will be met for conducting a full survey on a nationally representative sample, which is planned for 2021.

#### 36.2. Improved administrative-based or alternative data sources to address gender data gaps

The Ministry of Justice on a regular basis publishes data on the percentage of women in judicial authorities in its annual reports.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv\\_Eng/publication/2017/08-01-13\\_01\\_2017.htm](https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2017/08-01-13_01_2017.htm)

<sup>6</sup> <https://pravosudje.gov.hr/izvjesca-19834/statisticki-pregled-19845/19845P>



36.3. Production of knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)

The CBS has since 2006 annually issued a publication called *Žene i muškarci u Hrvatskoj* [Women and Men in Croatia -Annex to this Report ]. The publication features up-to-date statistical indicators describing the position of women and men in society, thus attempting to contribute to monitoring gender equality as one of the basic constitutional values of the Republic of Croatia

In addition to regularly publishing data, the CBS also releases data on its website, classified in several categories: Regular Publications (First Releases, Statistical Yearbooks, Monthly Statistical Reports), Studies and Analyses, and Special Editions. There are also complete databases with searchable metadata. It should be pointed out that, where possible, data are classified according to sex.

The Croatian Institute of Public Health has lately started collecting and improving the quality of a broader set of data on health conditions and the use of primary healthcare according to sex, which is expected to be published soon.

**37. Out of the following which are your country's top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years?**

Conduct of new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)

The CBS is planning to carry out a time-use survey on a nationally representative sample in 2022. The collected data will enable a comprehensive overview of the structure of activities in which respondents are involved according to different categories of respondent and the households they live in. The survey will provide data from which it will be possible to draw conclusions on gender differences in terms of time use.

As stated in the response to the previous question, the CBS is also planning to conduct a gender-based violence survey as part of the European Survey on Gender-based Violence against Women and Men in 2021. This is a victimology survey, which in the Republic of Croatia will be carried out for the first time on a nationally representative sample, and therefore offers immense analytical potential with regard to combating violence against women, offering a better understanding of conditionality and of factors influencing gender-based violence in a broad sense, and can also serve as a basis for policies for preventing and eliminating such forms of violence.

**38. Have you defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs?**

No, the national set of indicators for monitoring progress in the area of Sustainable Development Goals is being prepared and will be defined in the '*National Development*

*Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030*, which the Government of the Republic of Croatia is planning to adopt at the end of 2019.

**39. Has data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs begun?**

Yes, data collation and the compilation of gender-specific indicators under other SDGs has begun. A cross-sectional meeting was held, after which the MRDEUF collected contributions from the relevant bodies for SDG 16 related to: promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; enabling access to justice for all; forming efficient, responsible and inclusive institutions. The data will be used as part of the National Voluntary Review of progress in the implementation of 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

**40. Which of the following disaggregations<sup>7</sup> is routinely provided by major surveys in your country?**

The mentioned disaggregations are routinely provided in an overview of indicators in almost all statistical surveys in which the survey unit is an individual or a private person. Statistical data are also shown in other disaggregation categories, depending on the nature of the data, but these are categories which are routinely provided by almost all statistical surveys.

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<sup>7</sup> As specified in A/RES/70/1, adding to it education and matrimonial status.

**ABBREVIATIONS:**

CEA- Croatian Employers' Association  
CEDAW - UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women  
CBS – Croatian Bureau of Statistics  
CIPH – Croatian Institute of Public Health  
COC – Croatian Olympic Committee  
CoE – Council of Europe  
Council of the EU – Council of the European Union  
EIGE – European Institute for Gender Equality  
ECOSOC – UN Economic and Social Council  
EC – European Commission  
ESI – European Structural and Investment Funds  
EU – European Union  
GEA – Gender Equality Act  
GEC – Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe  
HLG - High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming  
ICT – Information and Communication Technology  
IPA – EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance  
MCPPI – Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning  
MDFYSP – Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy  
MEEC- Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts  
MFEA – Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs  
MLPS – Ministry of Labour and Pension System  
MRDEUF – Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds  
MoA – Ministry of Agriculture  
MoC – Ministry of Culture  
MoD – Ministry of Defence  
MoF – Ministry of Finance  
MoH – Ministry of Health  
MoI – Ministry of Interior Affairs  
MoJ – Ministry of Justice  
MVA– Croatian Ministry of Veterans' Affairs  
MSE – Ministry of Science and Education  
NCSD - National Council for Sustainable Development  
OGE – Government's Office for Gender Equality  
OHRRNM - Croatian Government's Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities  
RoC – Republic of Croatia  
STEM - Science, technology, engineering and mathematics  
UN – United Nations

**Annex 1****Women and Men in Croatia, 2018**

[https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv\\_Eng/menandwomen/men\\_and\\_women\\_2018.pdf](https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/menandwomen/men_and_women_2018.pdf)

**Annex 2****LIST OF ACTS:**

- 1 Gender Equality Act (Official Gazette, numbers 82/08, 69/17)
- 2 Anti-discrimination Act (Official Gazette, numbers 85/08, 112/12)
- 3 Act Ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Official Gazette – International Agreements, number 3/18)
- 4 Protection against Domestic Violence Act (Official Gazette, number 70/17)
- 5 Family Act (Official Gazette, number 103/15)
- 6 Act on the Rights of Victims of Sexual Violence During the Armed Aggression Against the Republic of Croatia in the Homeland War (Official Gazette, number 64/15)
- 7 Penal Code (Official Gazette, numbers 125/2011, 144/2012, 56/2015, 61/2015, 101/2017, 118/2018)
- 8 Criminal Procedure Act (Official Gazette, numbers 152/08, 76/09, 80/11, 121/11, 91/12, 143/12, 56/13, 145/13, 152/14, 70/17)
- 9 Maternity and Parental Benefits Act (Official Gazette, numbers 85/08, 110/08, 34/11, 54/13, 152/14, 59/17)
- 10 Child Allowance Act (Official Gazette, numbers 94/01, 138/06, 107/07, 37/08, 61/11, 112/12, 82/15, 58/18)
- 11 Act Amending the Social Welfare Act (Official Gazette, number 130/17)
- 12 Foster Care Act (Official Gazette, number 115/18)
- 13 Free Legal Aid Act (Official Gazette, number 143/13)
- 14 Act Ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure (Official Gazette, number 2/17)
- 15 Labour Act (Official Gazette, numbers 93/14 i 127/17)
- 16 Pension Insurance Act (Official Gazette, numbers 157/13, 151/14, 33/15, 93/15, 120/16, 18/18, 62/18, 115/18)
- 17 Same-Sex Life Partnership Act (Official Gazette, number 92/14)
- 18 Personal Names Act (Official Gazette, numbers 118/12, 70/17)

- 19 Aliens Act (Official Gazette, numbers 130/11, 74/13, 69/17, 46/18)
- 20 International and Temporary Protection Act (Official Gazette, numbers 70/15, 127/17)
- 21 Free Legal Aid Act (Official Gazette, number 143/13)
- 22 Healthcare Measures for the Realisation of the Right to Free Decision-making on Childbirth Act (Official Gazette, number 18/78)
- 23 Media Act (Official Gazette, numbers 59/04, 84/11, 81/13)
- 24 Electronic Media Act (Official Gazette, numbers 153/2009, 84/2011, 94/2013, 136/2013)
- 25 Croatian Radio-Television Act (Official Gazette, numbers 137/2010, 76/2012, 78/2016, 46/2017, 73/2017, 94/2018)
- 26 Environmental Protection Act (Official Gazette, numbers 80/13, 153/13, 78/15, 12/18, 118/18)
- 27 Nature Protection Act (Official Gazette, numbers 80/13, 15/18, 14/19)
- 28 Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Act (Official Gazette, numbers 157/13, 152/14, 39/18)
- 29 Adult Education Act (Official Gazette, numbers 17/07, 107/07, 24/10)
- 30 Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette, numbers 56/90, 135/97, 08/98, 113/00, 124/00, 28/01, 41/01, 55/01, 76/10, 85/10, 05/14)
- 31 Ombudsman for Children Act (Official Gazette, number 73/17)
- 32 Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities Act (Official Gazette, number 107/07)
- 33 Courts Act (Official Gazette, numbers 28/13, 33/15, 82/15, 82/16, 67/18)
- 34 Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities (Official Gazette, numbers 155/02, 47/10, 80/10, 93/11, 93/11)
- 35 International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Act (Official Gazette, number 146/08)

### **Annex 3**

#### **LIST OF STRATEGIES, PROGRAMMES, NATIONAL PLANS, ORDINANCES, RULES OF PROCEDURE:**

- Programme of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the 2016-2020 Term of Office [https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/ZPPI/Dokumenti%20Vlada/Program\\_Vlada\\_RH\\_2016\\_2020.pdf](https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/ZPPI/Dokumenti%20Vlada/Program_Vlada_RH_2016_2020.pdf)
- Guidelines of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the Development and Implementation of Active Labour Market Policy in Croatia in 2015-2017 <http://www.mrms.hr/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/smjernica-apz.pdf>
- Guidelines of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the Development and Implementation of Active Labour Market Policy in Croatia in 2018-2020 <http://www.mrms.hr/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Smjernice-APZ-2018.-2020..pdf>

- National Anti-discrimination Plan for 2017-2022  
<https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Nacionalni%20plan%20za%20borbu%20protiv%20diskriminacije%20za%20razdoblje%20od%202017.%20do%202022..pdf>
- National Strategy for Protection Against Domestic Violence for the 2017-2022 Period  
<https://mdomsp.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//Vijesti2017//Nacionalna%20strategija%20zastite%20od%20nasilja%20u%20obitelji%20za%20razdoblje%20do%202017.%20do%202022.%20godine.pdf>
- National Strategy for the Development of a Support System for Victims and Witnesses in the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2016-2020  
[https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2015\\_07\\_75\\_1437.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2015_07_75_1437.html)
- Strategy for Social Care for Elderly Persons in the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2017-2020  
<https://mdomsp.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//Vijesti2017//Strategija%20socijalne%20skrbi%20za%20starije%20osobe%20u%20RH%20za%20razdoblje%20od%202017.-2020.%20g.pdf>
- Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020  
<https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/ZPPI/Strategije/Strategija%20borbe%20protiv%20siroma%C5%A1tva.pdf>
- National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the Period 2013-2020
  - <https://www.zagreb.hr/UserDocsImages/arhiva/Nacionalna%20strategija%20za%20uklju%C4%8Divanje%20Roma%202013-2020.pdf>
  - <https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/arhiva/23102013/Nacional%20Roma%20inclusion%20strategy%202013-2020.eng.pdf>
- National Strategy for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2014-2020  
[https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//ZPPI/Strategije%20-%20OGP/socijalna%20politika/NACIONALNA%20STRATEGIJA%20ZA%20PRAVA%20DJECE%20U%20RHZA%20RAZDOBLJE%20OD%202014.%20DO%202020.%20GODINE\[1\].pdf](https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//ZPPI/Strategije%20-%20OGP/socijalna%20politika/NACIONALNA%20STRATEGIJA%20ZA%20PRAVA%20DJECE%20U%20RHZA%20RAZDOBLJE%20OD%202014.%20DO%202020.%20GODINE[1].pdf)
- Strategy of Regional Development of the Republic of Croatia until 2020  
[https://razvoj.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/O%20ministarstvu/Regionalni%20razvoj/razvojne%20strategije/Strategija%20regionalnog%20razvoja%20Republike%20Hrvatske%20za%20razdoblje%20do%20kraja%202020.\\_HS.pdf](https://razvoj.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/O%20ministarstvu/Regionalni%20razvoj/razvojne%20strategije/Strategija%20regionalnog%20razvoja%20Republike%20Hrvatske%20za%20razdoblje%20do%20kraja%202020._HS.pdf)
- National Plan for Improving the Social Dimension of Higher Education 2019-2021  
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