

REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR
ACTION (1995) AND THE OUTCOME OF THE
TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2000)
FOR PREPARATION OF REGIONAL REVIEW AND APPRAISALS IN THE CONTEXT
OF THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION
AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN 2010

**Part 1: Achievements and challenges encountered in promoting gender equality
and the empowerment of women**

In the recent five-year period, the Republic of Croatia has strengthened basic institutional mechanisms and has introduced key new legislative amendments with a view to preventing gender discrimination and improving the policy of equal opportunities. The effects of the implementation of existing anti-discrimination laws have been regularly monitored so that necessary amendments may be more easily implemented when they are proposed and adopted. Two important new organic laws have been adopted in the area of human rights, as have strategic plans for combating gender discrimination and other forms of discrimination. On 15 July 2008, the Croatian Parliament adopted the new **Gender Equality Act**, which has been aligned with the provisions of valid international standards, and with EU directives dealing with gender equality. The Act prescribes the general prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital or family status and sexual orientation. The less favourable treatment of women on the grounds of pregnancy, parenthood, and any type of guardianship is also considered as discrimination. The Act extends the area of prohibition of discrimination in the field of employment, labour, and education, and lays out the obligation to promote the raising of public awareness concerning the equality of men and women, and to keep statistics that are disaggregated by gender. In order to boost efficiency in the application of the Act, it prescribes the obligation of establishing commissions for gender equality in units of regional self-government and in the City of Zagreb, and the obligation of securing funds for their work. Improvements have been introduced in the area of court protection against discrimination in the form of institutes such as representative action, the determination of the burden of proof, and the principle of urgency of court proceedings. In addition to

remedies in civil proceedings, the victims of discrimination may also seek court remedy in misdemeanour proceedings, which introduces a significant novelty since it was precisely the lack of sanctions in the previous Act (of 2003) that raised one of the fundamental objections against it, i.e., its declarative character.

The **Anti-Discrimination Act** came into force on 1 January 2009, creating the prerequisites for the realisation of equal opportunities, and regulating protection against discrimination on grounds of sex (but also race, ethnic origin, colour, language, religion, political or other belief, national or social origin, economic status, property, trade union membership, social status, marital or family status, age, health condition, disability, genetic heritage, gender identity, expression or sexual orientation). The central body for the implementation of this Act is the People's Ombudsman.

In 2006, following a Government proposal, the Croatian Parliament adopted the **National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality** as the basic strategic document of the Republic of Croatia for eliminating discrimination against women and establishing real equality between women and men for the period from 2006 to 2010. The provisions of this National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality (which is the third in a row) are founded on national and other regulations, and corroborate the contents of gender equality guarantees which are part of international law, the *acquis communautaire*, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ILO conventions, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The National Policy integrates all objectives and measures of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the Concluding Comments of the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals, which confirms the principles of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of July 2005 on mainstreaming the gender perspective through the full and efficient application of the provisions of the Convention as a precondition for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the strategy of enhancing gender equality in the Republic of Croatia.

Implementation of the *National Policy* measures falls under the competence of state institutions, but a large number of activities are also conducted in cooperation with civil society organisations. The strategic framework and the action plan contain defined goals and a large number of measures for their implementation for the following critical areas: women's human rights, equal opportunities in the labour market, gender-sensitive education, equality in decision making, violence against women, women's health, and institutional mechanisms and implementation methods.

The *National Policy* also lays down a number of measures related to financing for the purpose of empowering women and strengthening efforts in achieving a society of equal opportunities. Some of the most important measures are: the local government's financial obligations towards implementing a gender equality policy, financing gender research from the National Budget, and Government support to NGOs in raising awareness about women's human rights.

By translating, publishing and disseminating the study of the European Women's Lobby "Gender Budgeting" in 2006, the Government Office for Gender Equality introduced the subject of gender budgeting. In this way, Croatia became involved at the right time in discussions on this issue that are taking place both in the EU and worldwide. The Ministry of Finance this year initiated a gender analysis of the execution of the State Budget in 2008.

Measures aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering women are also included in other national strategies, and in the plans and programmes adopted by the Government in the recent period. These include: the *National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence 2005-2007*, and for the period 2008-2010, with accompanying *Protocols on Response to Domestic Violence*, the *National Population Policy*, the *National Plan of Activities for the Rights and Interests of Children 2006-2012*, the *National Strategy for Providing Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from 2007 to 2015*, the *National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights from 2008 to 2011*, and the *National Plan to Combat Discrimination*.

The Republic of Croatia, as party to the **UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination of Women (CEDAW)**, has been monitoring and taking

suitable measures in applying the Convention. In October 2003, the second and third periodic report for the period from 1995 to 2003 was submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination of Women, which was considered in January 2005 at the 673rd and 674th session of the Committee (CEDAW/C/CRO/2-3). The Concluding Comments and the recommendations of the UN Committee concerning this report have been fully embedded in the content of the *National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2006–2010*. The drafting of the fourth and fifth periodic report, which will be submitted to the UN Committee in 2009, is underway.

The implementation of the Recommendations of the UN Committee has been stressed as a priority in the *National Programme for the Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the EU – NPAEU* – as part of the political criteria in the field of gender equality.

Other activities have also been undertaken with a view to informing the public and key stakeholders about the measures that have to be taken to implement the *Convention*.

We consider it necessary to mention here the following activities:

Since 2005, the Office for Gender Equality has continuously disseminated in print and electronic form the translation of the *Convention* and the *Concluding Comments* of the UN Committee.

In 2005, a forum was held under the title “Conclusions and recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Related to the second and third periodic report of the Republic of Croatia”, organised by the Centre for Human Rights in Zagreb.

In 2007, the Head of the Government Office for Gender Equality held an introductory presentation on the topic “Implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Republic of Croatia” at the seminar “Training of Young Roma”, organised by the Government Office for National Minorities.

In the same year, the Head of the Office presented the Croatian experiences of reporting on the implementation of the Convention at regional conferences held in Serbia and Montenegro.

In 2008, the Judicial Academy organised a round table discussion entitled “Gender Equality: Application of CEDAW before Croatian Courts and Croatian Legislation and Case Law” for judges, state attorneys and civil society representatives.

The First Progress Report on the Achievement of the Nationalised Millennium Development Goals was drafted in the Republic of Croatia for the period from August 2004 to December 2005 with defined indicators for all nine millennium sub-goals under the Millennium Development Goal: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women which was published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Croatian and in English in 2006.

Part 2: Progress concerning the implementation of the critical areas of concern from the Beijing Platform for Action, and further initiatives and activities from the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly

Women in the labour market

Achieving equal opportunities in the labour market is one of seven critical areas through which the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2006-2010 raises the possibility for introducing changes and eliminating gender discrimination in the labour market.

Since women account for the majority (62%) of the total unemployed, and since they are more frequently than men exposed to various forms of discriminatory treatment, efforts have continued to be made on improving the legislative and strategic framework, and on raising public awareness and sensitivity in this area.

The Gender Equality Act, the Anti-discrimination Act, and the Labour Code prohibit any form of sexual discrimination in the field of labour and employment, and guarantee the right of women and men to an equal salary for equal work.

In July 2008, the **Act on Maternity and Parenting Rights and Allowances** prescribed the basic entitlements of employed, self-employed and unemployed mothers/parents to parental leave and allowances given in the Labour Act and the Act on Maternity Leave for Self-Employed and Unemployed Mothers. The law redefines supplementary maternity leave as parental leave, introduces the possibility of using this leave in parts until the child's eighth year of life, allows the use of the entitlement to receive maternity allowance for all mothers who do not exercise the same entitlement as employed mothers when using the obligatory maternity leave to the amount of a minimum of 50% of the budget base, allows for the transfer of the entitlement to the other parent, etc.

In 2008, in the area of pension insurance, the **Act on Amendments to the Act on Entitlements Arising from the Pension Insurance of Active Military Persons, Police Officers and Authorised Official Persons** was adopted, by which entitlements arising from compulsory pension insurance based on intergenerational solidarity were specifically regulated in such a manner that the conditions related to retirement age and years of service were equalised, so that the entitlement to old-age pension and the early retirement pension is equal for men and women. In this way, full alignment has been achieved in this field with the *acquis communautaire*.

The Government has also adopted the *National Action Plan for Employment for the period from 2005 to 2008* which is based on the employment guidelines set by the European Union for Member States, and also includes guidelines referring to gender equality (6th EU Guideline). Based on this Plan, Annual Plans for Simulating Employment for 2006, 2007 and 2008 were adopted.

Pursuant to the *Joint Assessment of Employment Policy Priorities (JAP)*, which was signed between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the European Commission in 2008, a national Plan for the Promotion of Employment for 2009 and 2010 was adopted. One of the key priorities to be achieved through this National Plan is to improve the employability and participation rate of women of the prime-age group (especially those with low or inadequate skills) in the labour market. The measures aimed at meeting this target include: a review of the existing legislation and

policies on the labour market to guarantee that they are well-adjusted to the increased participation of women with lower qualifications, with special emphasis on raising their motivation to participate in continuous education and training; the provision of various education and training programmes adapted to the needs and circumstances of women of the primary age group (especially those with inadequate skills) who are returning to the labour market; and the improvement of access to affordable child care, while increasing the number of schools working in one shift to facilitate the participation of women in the labour market.

It is important to add also that the *Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM)* was signed with the European Commission as the national strategy for combating poverty and social exclusion. Although one chapter is specifically dedicated to the gender equality, the entire document is created on the principles of gender mainstreaming and all results indicators are gender sensitive.

It must be emphasised that great progress has been achieved in implementing measures related to eliminating sexist language and promoting language that reflects the principles of gender equality in the labour market.

Namely, in 2008, the Central Bureau of Statistics adopted the new *National Classification of Occupations* in which, for the first time, all occupations are stated in both the male and female gender, which has created the preconditions for a balanced representation of men and women in the labour market and for the elimination of gender role stereotypes.

The new Gender Equality Act prescribes that “in adopting solutions on assignments to a job and other solutions on the rights and duties of civil servants, the job title will be used in the male and female gender, and the same obligation also exists in the *Ordinance on unified standards and criteria for defining job titles and descriptions in the civil service*.

The Act also prescribes that, when announcing vacancies, the announcement must clearly state that persons of both sexes may apply for the announced vacancy, and advertisements must not contain expressions which cause or might cause

discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital or family status, and sexual orientation.

Special emphasis was placed in the foregoing period on the implementation of measures empowering women's entrepreneurship, and Croatian experiences in the area of supporting the development of women's entrepreneurship were stressed as an example of good practice at the international project of the Republic of Malta entitled "Taking Gender Equality to Local Communities" which was implemented as part of the *Gender Equality 2007* European Community project.

The share of women entrepreneurs in Croatia has been recording growth and is currently approaching 30%. With a view to strengthening women's entrepreneurship, ministries, local government bodies and NGOs have been implementing various programmes aimed at strengthening women's entrepreneurship and the economic empowerment of women.

The Ministry of the Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship (MELE) is preparing the adoption of the *Women's Entrepreneurship Development Strategy* and is continuously providing financial support through a separate project entitled "Women's entrepreneurship".

As part of this project, between 2004 and 2007, a total of 1,655 women entrepreneurs were supported with HRK 13 million. The "Women's Entrepreneurship" project was singled out as a separate project with total assigned funds to the amount of HRK 4,500,000 for its implementation in 2007. The beneficiaries of these funds are small and medium-sized enterprises, trades and crafts, cooperatives, and institutions, which are privately owned by women (51% and above). The stimulating measures include the procurement of IT equipment and business software for women entrepreneurs with up to three years in business, the obtaining of documents that need to be submitted for the approval of incentive business loans, consultancy services concerning registration and establishment, coverage of part of the registration costs, development of a business plan, investment studies, a marketing plan, etc., and additional entrepreneurship training and IT training in the first six months of operation.

Women have also had the opportunity to participate in other projects of the competent ministry, such as “Education for Entrepreneurships”, the co-financing of the specialist study “Strategic Entrepreneurship”, and in the “Creating an Existence” project.

The Ministry of the Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, and the Government Office for Gender Equality are financially supporting the Internet portal for women entrepreneurs www.poduzetna.hr. The World Day of Women Entrepreneurs has been regularly celebrated on 17 May every year under the organisation of the “Krug” Association of Businesswomen of Croatia, with the patronage of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Stjepan Mesić. This year, a prize for the most successful woman entrepreneur and manager in the country was awarded for the first time, which also attracted significant media attention.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development conducted an analysis of registered owners of agricultural holdings, trades and crafts, companies and cooperatives with a view to establishing gender equality in property and legal relations in rural areas. According to this analysis, women own 28% of agricultural holdings, 0.3% of trades registered in the Farm Registry, and 0.2% of companies and cooperatives entered in this Registry. Of the total number of registered hectares of arable land, 18% is owned by women. This Ministry is preparing a conference on the status of women in rural areas which will be held on the occasion of the World Rural Women’s Day on 15 October this year, where the results of the survey on the status, awareness, behavioural patterns, and needs of rural women will be presented.

For the purpose of collecting data and observing the condition and opportunities for advancing the status of women in the labour market, many other surveys were also conducted as follows.

In 2007, the Government Office for Gender Equality conducted an empirical survey entitled *Identifying Discrimination Standards in the Employment of Women*, in

cooperation with researchers from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, and the Croatian Employment Agency.

The Government Office for National Minorities, in cooperation with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), is conducting a survey on the status of women members of the Serbian national minority in the labour market on the basis of a recommendation by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

In 2008, the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, in cooperation with the Faculty of Economics of Zagreb University, conducted a scientific research project on the topic "Relation of Fertility and the Women's Employment Sector in Croatia".

The Economic Institute conducted a survey "Differences in Salaries between Men and Women", which shows that women at lower positions and with a lower level of education, in performing less complex jobs in the private sector, are exposed to a greater risk of inequality in terms of salaries.

As far as the difference in salaries is concerned, according to the latest accessible data from 2007 published by the Central Bureau of Statistics, the average gross salary for men in legal persons was 12.1% higher than the average salary for women, which is slightly less than in the previous year (12.4%). The reasons for differences in salaries is related to the distribution through economic sectors, differences in the professions/occupations, number of work hours, absence from work, work experience, professional training, position etc.

The MojPosao web portal regularly conducts surveys which include a gender component, such as the study of "Gender Roles in the World of Work" (2007), "Employment Survey" (2008), or the comprehensive study on the perception of gender differences in the business environment "Men and Women in the Business World".

Financial support is also provided for the projects of NGOs that promote equal opportunity policies in the field of work and employment. The CESI association has

printed the *Guide for Promoting the Policy of Equal Opportunities at Work*, and the Office for Gender Equality has translated and published on its website the European Commission documents – “Code of Practice for the Implementation of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value”, and the “Manual for Gender Mainstreaming of Employment Policies”.

With a view to raising public awareness about the discrimination of women in the labour market, a number of other activities have been conducted, among which we would like to point out the thematic session of the Parliamentary Gender Equality Committee, in cooperation with the Government Office for Gender Equality and the B.a.B.e association, on the eve of International Women’s Day 2007, entitled “Position of Women in the Labour Market”.

In 2008, under the organisation of the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality, the panel discussion “Women and Poverty – Job Uncertainty and Unemployment” was held, at which a large number of experts, representatives of the Government, state administration bodies, the academic community, NGOs, and trade unions discussed the gender aspects of temporary employment, illicit work, and unemployment.

In the same year, the MojPosao Internet portal organised under the auspices of the Government Office for Gender Equality a forum entitled “Is there a Such a Thing as a Stronger Sex in the Business World?”

Round table discussions were also held on the topic “The Feminisation of Poverty and Women in the Labour Market” organised by the Autonomous Women’s House Zagreb, as part of the European Commission support programme. CESI organised a conference under the title “The Position of Women in the Labour Market”, and B.a.B.e organised the conference “Development Model of Women’s Entrepreneurship within a Stimulating Entrepreneurial Environment” in the County of Vukovar-Srijem. The *Radno Pravo (Labour Law)* magazine ran a seminar where the Head of the Government Office for Gender Equality presented the topic “Gender Equality and

Anti-discrimination Measures with Special Emphasis on the Situation in Employment Relations”.

Prevention and elimination of violence against women

According to the opinion of the Ombudswomen for Gender Equality and NGOs, significant progress has been made in the area of suppressing domestic violence and other forms of violence against women. A large number of measures have been systematically implemented, focusing on suppressing domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, and on improving the status of victims of violence, on the basis of the *National Strategy for the Protection against Domestic Violence for the Period from 2005 to 2007*, the *National Strategy for the Protection against Domestic Violence for the Period from 2008 to 2010* with accompanying *Protocols on Response to Domestic Violence*, the *National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2006-2010*, and other relevant regulations.

New Proposal of the **Act on the Protection against Domestic Violence** of 2003 improves the work of bodies in the area of protection against domestic violence, and contributes to aligning the legislation with contemporary international guidelines, is in the procedure of being adopted. This Act also takes into account the provisions of the Misdemeanour Act that are relevant to the issue of domestic violence (provisional confinement, imprisonment, precautionary measures). The Act regulates the prevention, sanctioning and suppression of all types of domestic violence, the application of adequate measures against perpetrators, and the provision of protection of and assistance to the victim of violence, aimed at mitigating the consequences of already committed violence. It also extends the definition of domestic violence. The term “economic violence” has been introduced, which implies the deprivation of the right to economic independence. The prohibition of physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence in the family is explicitly laid out. Urgency is prescribed for procedures initiated on the grounds of the infringement of this Act for all competent authorities, and stricter fines and prison sentences have been introduced.

Croatia has been actively engaged in the Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, Including Domestic Violence, which officially began at the Launching Conference, held in Madrid in November 2006. By applying the recommendations of the Council of Europe, a campaign was also launched at the national level. The *National Committee for the Implementation of the Campaign against Domestic Violence against Women* was established in the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity in January 2006. The campaign began with the celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women – 25 November 2006 – by a public presentation in the premises of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. On that occasion, Prime Minister Ivo Sanader also expressed his support for its implementation. The key dates related to this campaign were 8 March – International Women's Day, 15 May – International Family Day, 22 September – National Day for Combating Violence against Women, and 25 November – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Round table discussions were held on the following topics: “Economic violence against women” and “Systematic funding of civil society organisations that provide direct protection to the victims of domestic violence”. The Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity also developed a TV spot entitled “**Report violence against women**”. A **hotline number** was established for women with disabilities who are victims of violence, and a *Guide for Media Reporting on Family Violence* has been developed.

On 9 and 10 May 2007, an international seminar was held in Zagreb under the title “**Men's active participation in combating domestic violence**”, which was organised by the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, and the Council of Europe Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs – Gender Equality Division. The National Day for Combating Violence against Women – 22 September 2007 – was also appropriately marked, and the sale of a supplementary postage stamp for voluntary purchase with the distinctive logo of this Campaign was introduced. The funds raised in selling the supplementary stamp were donated towards the end of 2007 to NGOs that manage safe-houses for victims of violence. A revised

edition of the *Address Book of Institutions, Organisations and Other Bodies that Provide Assistance, Support and Protection to Victims of Domestic Violence* was also published.

The Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity distributed Campaign posters, flyers and badges to women's NGOs, so that they could further disseminate them and raise public awareness concerning the issue of domestic violence. In order to include influential public figures – men – in the Campaign, the *National Committee for the Implementation of the Campaign* presented badges with the logo and slogan of the Campaign, as well as other promotional material, to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, the presidents of the Supreme and Administrative Court of the Republic of Croatia, the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, Members of Parliament, the president of the Croatian Football Association, and representatives of the Association of Professional Clubs of the Croatian Football First Division, the president and judges of the Constitutional Court, and the president and members of the Croatian Posts Directorate. A public competition was conducted under the title “*City and County in Combating Violence against Women*” to recognise units of local and regional self-government which during the Campaign implemented activities that marked a significant step forward in the area of protection against domestic violence. The Government Office for Gender Equality in 2006 translated, issued in 2,000 copies, and distributed the *Recommendation Rec(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the protection of women against violence*, and 10,000 flyers with the text of the *UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*.

In cooperation with NGO representatives and local self-governments, the Office established a Working Group for conducting an analysis and developing an Action Plan to combat all forms of violence against women, including the collection of statistical data. This Working Group developed the *Draft Protocol on Response to Sexual Violence*.

The Republic of Croatia cooperates regularly with the Council of Europe, the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men, to whom it submits reports on the implementation of the Council of Europe recommendation *Rec(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the protection of women against violence* in the Republic of Croatia.

This year, the Government established the *Commission for the Improvement of Protection against Domestic Violence* as its expert and advisory body.

State administration bodies systematically fund the work of NGOs engaged in combating domestic violence and other forms of violence against women and in improving the status of victims of violence.

In 2008, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was marked by the conclusion of a co-financing agreement for the work of safe-house and counselling centre for victims of domestic violence among the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, towns, counties and NGOs.

Surveys are regularly conducted concerning the issue of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, and concerning improving the status of victims of violence. Data on particular surveys on sexual violence may be found in the report of Ženska Soba (Women's Room) – Centre for Sexual Rights from Zagreb entitled “Sexual Violence in Croatia 2006-2007” http://www.zenskasoba.hr/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=18&Itemid=32, and on the websites of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality (www.prs.hr), the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity (www.mobms.hr), and the Government Office for Gender Equality (www.ured-ravnopravnost.hr).

Prevention of trafficking in women and assistance to victims of prostitution and trafficking in human beings

As early as in 2002, the Republic of Croatia ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the accompanying protocols: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea. In addition to the aforementioned Convention, the Republic of Croatia also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. In 2007, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was also ratified.

The criminal offence of trafficking in human beings was introduced in Article 175 of the Criminal Code through its amendments in 2004. The definition of this criminal offence transposed almost completely the definition given in the Palermo Protocol. With further improvements of the legislation, and the new amendments to the Criminal Code in 2006, a new paragraph was added to Article 175 introducing sanctions for the user of the services of victims of trafficking in human beings. The most recent amendments to the Criminal Code in 2008 additionally incriminate the unlawful adoption of children, and the commission of the subject-matter criminal offence by an official person.

In addition to the above, Croatian legislation has a number of other laws which contain provisions related to providing assistance and protection to the victims of human trafficking, such as the Witness Protection Act (2003), the Act on the Responsibility of Legal Entities for Criminal Offences (2003), the Aliens Act (2007), the Act on Amendments to the Social Welfare Act (2007), the Act on Free Legal Aid (2008) and the Criminal Procedure Act (2008).

The **Protocol on Identification of, Assistance to, and Protection of the Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings** was adopted in 2008. The new **National Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for the Period from 2009 to 2011** was adopted in 2009.

Concerning cooperation at national, regional and international levels, all institutions within the Republic of Croatia whose remit includes the issue of trafficking in human beings have been actively engaged since 2004 in international initiatives, seminars and conferences dealing with the issues of human trafficking. The Ministry of the Interior, as the body in charge of identifying the victims of human trafficking, participates in regional and international operative actions and actively cooperates with Interpol and Europol.

With a view to exchanging information with EU Member States and further aligning our system with that of the European Union, numerous projects have been implemented in the Republic of Croatia since 2004.

Within the established system of combating trafficking in human beings, civil society organisations are an important and equal partner. Civil society organisations that operate within the PETRA Network of NGOs are directly involved in providing assistance and protection to the victims of human trafficking, since PETRA representatives are members of the **National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings/ Operative Team of the National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings**.

Civil society organisations manage two national safe-houses (financed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia), are members of mobile teams, and operate a hot line for combating trafficking in human beings. This cooperation was formalised in the following agreements: the Cooperation Agreement between the Office for Human Rights, as the National Coordinator's Office, and the PETRA Network (2007), the Cooperation Agreement of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Ministry of the Interior with civil society organisations dealing with the provision of services of safe accommodation to victims of trafficking in human beings (2008), the Cooperation Agreement between the Office for Human Rights and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and OIP (Organizacija za integritet i prosperitet) Split and the Home for the Re-education of Children and Young People (2009). The Office for Human

Rights, within its annual tendering procedure for funding the work of civil society organisations, stresses that the suppression of trafficking in human beings is one of the priority areas for financing.

Within the established system for combating trafficking in human beings in the Republic of Croatia, great attention has been paid to the implementation of training for target groups. Since 2004, a number of training seminars have been conducted for the following target groups: police officers, members of the armed forces who are deployed to peace-keeping missions, military police personnel, social welfare personnel, the personnel of family centres, healthcare personnel, judicial personnel, students, journalists, tourism personnel, and representatives of civil society organisations. The topic of combating trafficking in human beings is also part of the regular Judicial Academy and Police Academy training curricula.

Besides training target groups, the Government of the Republic of Croatia also devotes great attention to conducting awareness raising campaigns related to the issues of trafficking in human beings. Thus, three large public awareness raising campaigns have been conducted since 2004. The first campaign (2005) focused on the protection of victims of human trafficking, the second one (2006) placed special emphasis on children as victims of trafficking, while the most recent campaign (2008) was aimed at raising the awareness of the potential users of the services of victims of trafficking in human beings.

Education and training of women

In the Republic of Croatia there is no gender gap in terms of access to education, and the illiteracy level is negligible (1.5%). Data show that there is an equal proportion of female and male students in primary and secondary schools, while girls prevail when it comes to enrolment in universities. The introduction of gender-sensitive education at all levels, the elimination of gender stereotypes, and the systematic training of teaching staff concerning gender equality have been established

as national priorities. The measures and activities to meet this goal have been included in the *National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality*, as well as in other important national documents, including in the provisions of the Gender Equality Act.

Croatia is recording a continuous and growing trend of women in education. According to the data of the Central Bureau of Statistics, out of the total number of students who graduated from higher education institutions in 2006, 59.3% were women while 40.7% were men. The growing trend of women in education has not been interrupted since 1960, when only 31.8% of graduates were female students, but their share has continuously grown, as opposed to the number of male graduates, whose share has continuously fallen, for example from 68.2% in 1960 to the aforementioned 40.7% in 2006. If this trend continues, we can also expect significant changes in the labour market, which will, in the long run, favour women, since they will be better qualified to perform highly professional and intellectually more demanding jobs.

Although women in Croatia are in the majority among graduates, they are still underrepresented in the field of IT (20.4%), engineering (20.4%), and architecture and construction (32.6%), which shows that the choice of university reflects the still existing division of work into male and female jobs. Women have a greater tendency to select social sciences and the humanities, so that they account for over 90% of all graduates in the field of education for kindergarten and school teachers, and in the field of social welfare services. They are also in the majority in the field of education science (85.2%), arts (68.1%), the humanities (78.6%), social science (76.9%), law (69.8%), natural science (82.3%), etc. Women are in the minority when it comes to technical sciences, although in the last few years growth has been recorded in newly enrolled females. In line with the Lisbon Declaration, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports has included in its objectives up to 2010 an increase in the number of professionals graduating in the field of mathematics, science and technology, and particularly an increase in the proportion of women in these professions.

Women with the academic titles of Doctor of Science and Master of Science account for 44% of the overall R&D sector. Of this number, of those employed in the business sector, 40.1% are women, in higher education the figure stands at 42.7%, while the respective proportion in the state sector is 50.1%. The ratio between women and men with academic titles is close to equal: in 2006, 47.5% of women and 52.5% of men had an MA, and 48.5% of women and 51.5% of men had a DSc title.

The *Textbook Standard* which follows the requirements laid down in the *Gender Equality Act* was developed with a view to implementing the measures related to gender-sensitive education in the entire education system, while eliminating gender stereotypes from textbooks and curricula, and systematically training the actors in this process in gender equality at all levels of the system. A programme of training and professional development in the field of gender equality has been developed for the actors in the education sector. A further step in this area was achieved with the adoption of the **Act on Professional Titles and Academic Degrees** of 2007, pursuant to which there is an obligation to give professional titles and academic degrees in the male and female gender.

Based on an analysis of primary-school textbooks for teaching the mother tongue and literature conducted in 2007 by the Ombudswomen for Gender Equality, it was concluded that “a positive step has been made in using gender-sensitive language, which is in line with the ethics requirements of the Textbook Standard – 94% of text in the textual body of textbooks uses either gender neutral or gender sensitive language”. In the period that follows, additional efforts will also be made to consistently meet the artistic-graphic requirements prescribed by the Textbook Standard, since “74% of the characters shown in the drawings, photographs and other artistic-graphic design accompanying the texts in the textbooks are male.” The Ombudswoman for Gender Equality considers that the equal visibility of female and male characters in the design solutions would mean another step in the direction of promoting gender equality. The survey “Human Rights in Primary Schools – Theory and Practice, 2008-2009”, which

was conducted by the Centre for Human Rights, confirms that there is a tendency to present success equally in terms of gender and participation in various activities and in performing various jobs by women and men, and that textbooks do not generally promote stereotypes based on gender and physical appearance.

Although *women's studies* have not yet been institutionalised, encouraging steps have been taken in compliance with the obligation to implement the measures from the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2006-2010. For instance, the *National Council for Higher Education* adopted a *Recommendation* in September 2008 and sent it to the Rector's Conference Society and to university senates. The Recommendation states that the *National Council for Higher Education* supports the introduction of gender-sensitive education at tertiary level and, in line with this, recommends the development and introduction of a new subject "Women's Studies" in undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate studies of those higher education institutions that have the resources and conditions for implementing it, and encourages higher education institutions to develop a proposal for the "Women's Studies" curriculum and for its launch at undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels of the relevant higher education institutions.

On the other hand, gender/female studies subjects have already been introduced at Croatian universities. Thus, various faculties teach subjects such as "Psychology of Gender and Sex", "Domestic Violence and Abuse", "Sexual and Gender Identity", "Gender Textuality" "The Body and the Subject", "Sex Choice and Culture", "Women and Education", "Bioethics and the Female Issue" , "The Female Issue: Literature and Philosophy", "Gender Sociology", "Feminist Theories and Movements", "Gender, Women's Movements and Society", "Gender and Social Work", "Social Work and Domestic Violence", "Introduction to Gender Studies", "Feminist Theories", etc.

Women in positions of power and decision making

In the field of promoting the equality of women and their representation and participation in structures of power and decision making, important steps were taken in the reporting period aimed at improving the legislative framework, and in raising public awareness of the need for the greater participation of women at all levels in the exercise of authority.

The Council of Europe definition which states that a significant imbalance of one gender in bodies of public and political decision making exists when the representation of this gender is under 40% has been included in the Gender Equality Act. The duty of introducing special measures has been explicitly prescribed for political parties and other authorised proposers. The representation of men and women on electoral lists for the Croatian Parliament, for representative bodies of units of local and regional self-government, and for the European Parliament should not be significantly imbalanced, or lower than 40%. The timeframe to achieve these limits is the period of three electoral cycles, which means that a gradual increase has to be achieved at the latest during the third regular elections following the day this Act comes into force. The Act also prescribes sanctions for political parties and other authorised proposers who do not comply with the gender equality principle, and who do not take into account the balanced representation of women and men on electoral lists when putting forward their lists.

The Act on the Election of Members of Representative Bodies in Units of Local and Regional Self-Government also prescribes that the proposer of the electoral list must take into account the balanced representation of men and women, and the Act on Political Parties lays down the principle of positive discrimination, providing for 10% additional financial support for elected members of the under-represented gender.

Following the last Parliamentary elections in 2007, 35 women were elected out of a total of 153 Members of Parliament, which accounts for 23%. One woman is Deputy Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, and 21% of women carry out the duty of presidents of parliamentary working bodies/committees. A woman is president of the National Committee for EU Accession. Two out of four deputy prime ministers are women. Women hold 13% of the total of 15 ministerial positions. Among the junior

ministers, 28% are women and 23% of those perform the duty of state secretary. A total of 35% of women hold high-ranking administrative positions.

The President of the Constitutional Court is a woman. Women at this court account for 46% of the total. The share of women at the Supreme Court is 47%, and at the Administrative Court it is 71%. The Chief Public Prosecutor has 22 deputies of whom 7 are women (32%), and 9 out of 20 county public prosecutors are women, which accounts for 45%.

The Government Office for Gender Equality, in cooperation with NGOs and county commissions for gender equality, conducted campaigns with a view to increasing the share of women standing for election to parliament in 2007, and in local elections in 2005 and 2007.

In 2007, Recommendation *Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making* was translated, printed and presented to the public. The second edition of this Recommendation was published before the local elections in 2009.

The Office ordered and published on its website the results of the survey “Monitoring the frequency and manner of gender representation and gender issues in general on TV programmes related to the 2007 parliamentary elections”, and supported the research about women in politics carried out by Centre for Women’s Studies association (udruga Centar za ženske studije).

In 2007, as part of a public tender for support to NGO projects, the Office supported four projects related to the issue of conducting parliamentary elections, and for the 2009 local elections, the grant covered 23 NGO projects which dealt with the increase in the representation of women on electoral lists for representative bodies of units of local and regional self-government, including the empowerment of women with disabilities for political action.

Activities conducted as part of the mentioned projects (campaigns, numerous seminars, round tables, and various promotional activities) contributed to raising public

awareness about the insufficient participation of women in political decision making, and political parties were urged to take into account the balanced representation of sexes on electoral lists at the coming elections.

The Gender Equality Committee of the Croatian Parliament also held thematic sessions related to the political participation of women: “Young and active: the political participation of young women”, and “Women in the 2009 local elections”.

A campaign was conducted before the local elections in 2009 aimed at promoting the political representation of women at local elections entitled “Let’s strike the right balance”. Besides the aforementioned activities, a round table discussion was also organised under the title “What must be done to increase the political representation of women at local level” with a view to sending a public message to political parties prompting them to include 40% of female candidates on their lists, in conformity with the provisions of the Gender Equality Act. A TV and radio clip was developed within the campaign, promoting compliance with the prescribed obligations. Both clips were broadcast on TV channels and radio stations holding national and local concessions in March and April this year.

At the recent elections, the State Electoral Commission used for the first time both the male and female forms of nouns in the forms that candidates fill in stating their acceptance of the candidature.

The results of the conducted local elections showed that there has been an increase in the share of women on the candidate lists, and an increase of their share in representative bodies at local level. This was on average from 14.5% to 21.4% in county assemblies, from 15.7% to 20.7% in town councils, and from 8.4% to 12.2% in municipal councils. Although we cannot be completely satisfied with the pace of these increases, it is a fact that the representation of women is continuously growing if we compare the results of the local elections conducted in 2001, 2005, and 2009.

Promotion of women's human rights

The promotion and protection of women’s human rights is an important part of the national legislation and of the strategic commitments of the Government of the

Republic of Croatia in implementing the human rights development policy without discrimination on the grounds of sex. In addition to the development of anti-discrimination legislation, a large number of different activities have been undertaken to spread knowledge and understanding of women's human rights, and to raise public awareness of this issue. A number of conferences, round table discussions, seminars, public forums, public debates, campaigns, and other promotional actions have been conducted, very often in cooperation with NGOs. In 2007, with the financial support of the European Commission, the Government Office for Gender Equality, as part of its efforts in implementing the Gender Equality Community Programme, organised an international "Awareness Raising Conference on EU Policies and Legislation in the Area of Gender Equality" with the participation of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, Ms Jadranka Kosor.

With a view to informing the Croatian public about the most important international documents on women's human rights from 2005 to 2009, tens of thousands of different publications have been printed and widely disseminated, including the "Short Guide through CEDAW – the Convention on the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination against Women and its application in the Republic of Croatia", and Recommendations of the Council of Europe on Gender Equality Standards and Mechanisms, on Gender Mainstreaming in Education, on the Protection of Women against Violence, and on the Balanced Participation of Men and Women in Public and Political Life.

The public also has access to the Croatian translation of the EU strategy "*Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010*". The "*Glossary of Gender Terminology according to EU Standards*", developed by the NGO Centre for Women's Studies", was also published.

In addition to strategic documents in this area, tens of thousands of flyers have been distributed with the text of the Gender Equality Act, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, specifically addressing the impact of war on women, and women's contribution to conflict resolution and

sustainable peace, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, etc.

State administration bodies and units of local and regional self-government regularly finance NGO projects through public tenders, and foster partnerships with civil society representatives. In the last four years, the Government Office for Gender Equality has financially supported about 70 projects of NGOs that are actively engaged in the area of gender equality. The Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity is funding NGO projects concerning the protection of women against domestic violence, and projects related to the advancement of the rights of young people and children. According to the report of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs, it is clear that support to projects protecting and promoting women's human rights has increased, so that in 2006 it amounted to 2.47%, and in 2007 to 4.5% of funds from the State Budget earmarked to support NGO projects. Six projects on improving the status of women and promoting women's human rights are currently being conducted as part of the PHARE 2006 pre-accession programme "*Democratisation and Human Rights*".

Training of all civil servants in the protection of human rights and in the legislation covering this area has been conducted since 2007 in the Training Centre at the Central State Office for Administration through one-day seminars. The Judicial Academy has regularly been presenting this topic in the training curricula for judicial staff. The project "Advancement of the Gender Equality Legal Framework" was funded from the pre-accession programmes of the European Union, and implemented by the Faculty of Law of Zagreb University. This project included training for judges, employers, and politicians.

With the amendments in 2006 to the **Criminal Code**, a new paragraph was added defining hate crime as a new criminal offence. The **Free Legal Aid Act** was adopted in 2008, giving the opportunity to NGOs to become actively engaged in representing citizens before courts in civil and administrative disputes, and in counselling and raising women's awareness of legal protection mechanisms in the case of discrimination.

Special attention has been given to the advancement of the status of women who are members of national minorities, and women with disabilities.

The Republic of Croatia was among the first states to sign the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and embedded its commitments in the National Strategy for the Equalisation of Possibilities for Persons with Disabilities from 2007 to 2015. At the 12th Croatian Symposium of Persons with Disabilities, discussions focused in particular on the “Application of the UN Convention on Women with Disabilities”.

NGO projects have been supported, and workshops and seminars have been conducted related to the empowerment of women with disabilities. Regular cooperation has been established with the Association of Persons with Disabilities (SOIH). The implementation of an extensive empirical survey on the status of women with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia is currently underway.

The rights of women members of national minorities are protected by the application of the *Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities*, by the implementation of the *National Programme for the Roma*, and the *Action Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015* (HRK 14 million was allocated for this purpose in 2007, which is 500% more than in 2005). Measures to advance the status of women members of national minorities are also included in the *National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality*.

In cooperation with the Office for National Minorities, the Office for Gender Equality established a *Working Group for improving the collection of statistical data on the status of Roma women in local communities and in society as a whole, in the area of education, employment, healthcare, and on their participation in public and political life*. Cooperation was also established with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in the field of research concerning the reproductive health of and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases among Roma women. A *Working Group* was also

established to *collect data on women members of national minorities and for the development of a programme of action for advancing their status*. Representatives of NGOs are involved in the work of these working groups.

The *Gender Equality Act* prohibits the public display and presentation of women and men in an insulting, belittling, and humiliating manner as regards their gender or sexual orientation, and binds the media to raise awareness of the equality of women and men through the content, concepts, and focus of their programmes and thorough self-regulating acts.

Detailed information on all the mentioned steps taken with the aim of promoting and protecting women's human rights, with accompanying documents, surveys and analyses, is available on the website of the Office for Gender Equality (www.ured-ravnopravnost.hr), the website of the Ombudswomen for Gender Equality (www.prs.hr), and on the websites of other state administration bodies and NGOs.

Women and health

The Croatian Institute of Public Health has been systematically collecting, monitoring and processing data on health indicators disaggregated by gender, including data on hospital morbidity, deceased persons, healthcare personnel, all newborns per weight and sex, perinatal mortality rates, workers injured at work, and those with occupational diseases. The data disaggregated by gender are published in the Croatian Health Service Yearbook.

The *National Programme for the Early Detection of Breast Cancer* has been implemented since 2006. As part of this Programme, a free mammography examination has been provided to all women born between 1937 and 1941, and those born between 1950 and 1955, and an informative brochure "Early Detection of Breast Cancer – What Every Woman Needs to Know" was printed and distributed to all women who received the invitation to the mammography examination. The "Day of Daffodils" has already become a tradition in Croatia, when, through various events covered by the media, women's attention is drawn to the importance of the early detection of breast cancer. The "Day of Mimosas" was also marked, when women

were given the message about the importance of the early detection of cervical cancer. As part of the *Croatian National Colorectal Cancer Early Detection Programme*, another information brochure with instructions was printed and distributed to all persons who have so far received an invitation to participate in a screening (all persons born between 1933 and 1937). With a view to informing the public on the public health significance of these national programmes for the early detection of cancer, a number of TV and radio programmes were broadcast, and press conferences, public forum discussions, and meetings with NGOs were organised. In addition to the existing programmes for the early detection of breast and colon cancer, a programme for the early detection of cervical cancer is also planned. These programmes encompass the entire population of defined age groups in conformity with the recommendations of the European Commission: for breast cancer, all women aged 50-69, and for colon cancer, all persons aged 50-74. The invitations are sent in a planned manner according to the years of birth. All persons with detected pathological changes are ensured further free diagnostic procedures and treatment. In addition, as part of the School Health Service, training and informational material has been developed and distributed in primary healthcare (carcinoma of the cervix, alcohol, sexually transmitted diseases).

In the course of 2006 and 2007, training seminars entitled “*News in the Field of the Reproductive Health of Adolescents*” were organised by the School Health Service at the Croatian Institute for Public Health, the Croatian Society for School and University Health, and the County Institutes of Public Health with the aim of raising the awareness of school-health physicians about the importance and presence of the problem of reproductive health among students of primary and secondary school and university, and of training them to more promptly and easily detect and resolve problems, with an emphasis on the development of prevention.

Measures promoting sexual health and the prevention of disease, information and continuous education on the types of sexually transmitted diseases, their symptoms and ways of contracting them, and the importance of prevention and protection measures, as well as the prompt treatment of the diseased and their contacts have been systematically implemented in the Republic of Croatia. The programme for combating,

preventing and suppressing STDs is implemented through the **Programme of Healthcare Measures**, and the **National HIV/AIDS Health Protection Programme**, as well as by special programmes which include primary, secondary and tertiary prevention measures. Special programmes for the prevention of STDs, including HIV/AIDS are: the programme of improving access to voluntary HIV counselling and testing through established networks of centres for voluntary, anonymous and free (also without referral) counselling on the measures of protection against STDs and testing for HIV; harm reduction and outreach programmes for populations with risk behaviours in terms of HIV and other blood-transmitted infections.

Health education and sexual education, including education about protection against all sexually transmitted diseases in primary and secondary schools is conducted according to the Programme of Healthcare Measures, and as part of the regular activities of the School Health Service, and according to special programmes in cooperation with NGOs. Nearly 400,000 primary and secondary school children have undergone education by doctors of school medicine, mostly covering topics such as maturity, reproductive health and the prevention of addictive behaviour. In school health counselling centres, which operate as part of the regular activities of school healthcare services, a large number of students have sought advice or counselling concerning reproductive health. Special reproductive health counselling centres have been established in a number of towns, with the assistance of the local community. The counselling centres operate within institutes of public health according to the open doors principle, and gynaecologists, who implement reproductive health protection measures, are also involved in this work.

Part 3: Institutional development

In this area, the process of empowerment and the improvement of the coordination of bodies for the promotion of gender equality and for gender mainstreaming at national level has continued, and a large number of new gender equality commissions have been established at county, town and municipal levels.

We already mentioned in the last report on the progress achieved until 2005 that a Parliamentary Gender Equality Committee has been operating in Croatia since 2000, the Gender Equality Ombudsperson since 2003, and the Government Office for Gender Equality since 2004. We also gave an overview of the mandate and remit of these basic national mechanisms.

The new Gender Equality Act redefines and extends the powers and remit of the Gender Equality Ombudsperson who assumes the function of an independent body in charge of combating discrimination in the area of gender equality in line with the obligations of transposing the EU *acquis*. The duties of the Gender Equality Ombudsperson include: receiving complaints from any natural persons or legal entities regarding discrimination in the area of gender equality; providing assistance to natural and legal persons who lodged a complaint of sexual discrimination when instituting legal proceedings; taking steps to investigate individual complaints prior to the legal proceedings; conducting, with the consent of the parties involved, a mediation process with the possibility to reach an out-of-court settlement; collecting and analysing statistical data on cases of sexual discrimination; conducting independent surveys concerning discrimination; and producing independent reports.

Since the Ombudsperson submits annual reports to the Croatian Parliament about her work (which are available to the public through the website), Parliament regularly discusses gender mainstreaming achievements.

The Croatian Parliament adopts the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality, and these issues are also discussed during the adoption of other legal proposals and acts. Besides at plenary Parliament sessions, regular discussions are also conducted at regular and thematic sessions of the Parliamentary Gender Equality Committee, the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights, and, from time to time, also in other Parliamentary working bodies, with the participation of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality, the Head of the Government Office for Gender Equality, the competent ministries, experts, NGO representatives, and in the presence

of the media.

For example, the Gender Equality Committee held thematic sessions on the implementation of the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality, the new Gender Equality Act, the position of women in the labour market, the political participation of women in local elections, the national (public) television (HRT) report on the promotion of gender equality, and on other topics. Parliamentary discussions contribute to raising public awareness and to strengthening and promoting the importance of achieving real equality between men and women. Cooperation among the Parliamentary Gender Equality Committee, the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality, and the Office for Gender Equality has been improved, since they jointly participate in a large number of different forums, round table discussions, public debates, and other events, and they also cooperate in drafting regulations in this area.

Part 4: Remaining challenges and actions to address them

The implementation of the gender equality policy in practice requires a mix of measures and special actions, accompanied by the adoption of new, and the evaluation of existing, legal acts, and other programmes and policies aimed at faster and more efficient progress in eliminating gender discrimination.

The *National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2006-2010* clearly shows that the problems and challenges, and the planned actions that we take in an effort to eliminate the discrimination of women, are very similar to those laid out in the strategic documents of most European countries. To achieve *de facto* equality it will still be necessary to invest additional efforts in order to attain equal economic independence and prosperity between men and women, to reach a balance between work and private life, to promote equal representation in the decision-making process, to abolish gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings, and to eliminate gender stereotypes in various social areas, while continuing to improve statistical

analyses and gender surveys. Although the mechanisms for gender mainstreaming at national and local level have already been established, it is necessary to continue to build their financial and administrative capacities with a view to increasing their efficiency. The strengthening of institutional mechanisms will be conducted through training and through the coordination of their actions, and especially by encouraging and building the network of gender equality coordinators in ministries, other state administration bodies, and local gender equality commissions.

One of the key priorities in the coming period is the development and adoption of the new National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality for the Period 2011-2015, which will be based on the achievements and evaluation results of the current National Policy. Another priority is the adoption of the new Strategy for Combating Domestic Violence for the Period 2011-2013. The adoption of an action plan to eliminate all other forms of violence against women and a Protocol on Response to Sexual Violence is also planned.

Within the framework of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) one of the priorities is supporting access to employment for women which will be carried out through 3,0 € worth project “Women in the Labour Market”. The project aims at increasing employability of disadvantaged women and assisting their access to the labour market. It will support the development and implementation of more effective active labour market policy and tailor-made methods of work, targeting disadvantaged women and taking into account gender mainstreaming principles. The target group consists of women over 40, long term unemployed, inactive women receiving, or without any social benefits, single mothers inactive or unemployed for more than six months, women from rural areas and women belonging to national minorities with special focus on Roma women. The project is expected to start in April 2010.

The empirical survey “Perceptions, Experiences and Views on Gender Discrimination in the Republic of Croatia” is currently underway, and its results will be used to make

gender analyses and to develop strategic documents and action plans in the coming period.

The Strategic Plan of the Government Office for Gender Equality stresses that raising the awareness of the public and of state administration about the need to eliminate gender discrimination and promote real equality between women and men is one of the most important priorities in the coming five-year period. The other priorities in this period include continuing cooperation with NGOs through targeted projects focused on raising public awareness and educating various special interest stakeholders. It is important to continue work on informing the public about international and national documents dealing with gender equality.

Special attention will be devoted to monitoring the implementation and efficiency of the Gender Equality Act, the Anti-discrimination Act, and other relevant anti-discrimination legislation.

The fourth and fifth periodic report of the Republic of Croatia pursuant to Article 18 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is in preparation, and at the end of this year it will be forwarded to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The report will contain consolidated indicators on the progress achieved in the last five years, and define future priorities in line with the commitments arising from implementing the Convention.